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THE TURN OF THE WHEEL

By Frank Lee Benedict

HELEN VINCENT was twenty-five, a widow, a famous beauty and exceptionally clever, even in this land of clever women. She had married at twenty, and her husband had died within the year, leaving a colossal fortune entirely at her disposal. She had not loved George Vincent, nor had she married him for his money. Three potent influences had urged her on: his great love for her, the iron will of her stepmother and the fact that, young as she was, life looked empty and desolate, in spite of position and social success.

She had spent the last two years in Europe, with the world of society at her feet, had refused several coronets and their incumbrances, and this Winter, finding herself as tired of Nice as she was of visits in English country houses, had returned to New York shortly before the beginning of Lent. Her sister-in-law accompanied her, for the two were inseparable and thoroughly sympathetic, though Mrs. Raynor was the elder by twenty years. Both possessed the capacity for feminine friendship so common among American women, which, however, according to English female novelists, is denied their foreign sisters.

It was *mi-carême* evening, and Mrs. Vincent was giving a dinner, because her spoiled cousin, Blanche Sinclair, had begged her to do so. That lady arrived before any of the other guests, looking dainty and pretty enough to have just stepped off a Watteau fan.

"Even Alice Raynor isn't downstairs—Helen, how gorgeous you look!" was her salutation. "I put my newest new gown on in honor of

the occasion. I know I am looking my best—but you might just say so, you know."

"You can't stop talking long enough to let me," Mrs. Vincent said, laughing. "I never before knew you to be in advance of the hour."

"My dear, I am quite frantic. That wretched Pinçon has sent me her bill; it's twelve hundred more than it ought to be, and she insists on having the money at once, the wretch! And Sydney, in his last letter, begged me not to ask for any more this month."

"Not unreasonable, considering the amount he left at your disposal."

"My dear, it didn't cover half; but I hate to worry him when he is away for his health. And, oh, if you would help me——"

"Of course I will; but, Blanche—I'm not scolding; only, you ought not to be so extravagant—a husband as kind as yours deserves better treatment."

"I mean to be so good and wise. Now you are home again, you will keep me straight. And I may have the money?"

"I will come to breakfast and bring you a cheque."

"You are the dearest girl!" Mrs. Sinclair cried, in high spirits at once.

She had been accustomed all her life to putting her troubles on her cousin. She was several years the younger, and the two had been brought up together, as Helen's stepmother had been Blanche's guardian and relative. Everybody had spoiled her from childhood, and her husband displayed the same indulgence, though she must often have tried him severely during

their two years of married life, with her extravagance, her flirtations and her general wilfulness.

"Does Ralph Herbert know that you invited Jock Deerforth?" she asked.

Mrs. Vincent lifted her eyebrows in haughty surprise, as she answered: "I am not aware that Ralph's being our forty-fourth cousin—if he is so near—gives him the privilege of arranging my dinner list."

"As if he would venture! He is the one person you ever quarrel with—and he is always so nice! You ought to have fallen in love with each other; but you never would, just because it might have seemed natural."

"Not to either of us, certainly," Mrs. Vincent replied.

"Ralph always keeps Deerforth at arm's length, though quite civil in his grand way," Blanche went on. "Now, Jock isn't nearly so black as he is painted, and he goes everywhere. I was so glad you let me introduce him. And you like him, don't you?"

"He has nice manners, and he is bright and witty. As I have known him only a fortnight, you can't expect me to say more."

Mrs. Raynor entered at this moment, and with her came a pretty, dumpy little woman, who somehow reminded one of a white pigeon that has too many feathers.

"Oh, dear me!" sighed the dumpy little woman; "I feel as if I were coming to bits, though Alice Raynor has just set me to rights! How are you, Helen? You look lovely, and so does Blanche—and how your things do stay where they are put! Mine never will."

"Ralph Herbert says he means to carry a basket about to put your pieces in," laughed Blanche.

"I need one," said Mrs. Liscome, dropping into a chair. "But I never shall need it to put Ralph's feelings in, for he has none."

"A more sensitive or a kinder man never lived," returned Mrs. Raynor, who was tall and imposing enough for her words always to carry weight.

"You will agree with me there, Helen?"

"Oh, no doubt," Mrs. Vincent replied, indifferently.

"He is too perfect—it tires me always to look up!" cried Mrs. Sinclair. "Now, Jock Deerforth——"

"Hush!" interrupted Mrs. Vincent.

The doors opened and several gentlemen entered. Ralph Herbert was the last to arrive, and Mrs. Vincent caught a faint expression of surprise on his face—invisible to any one who did not know him so well as she—at the sight of Jock Deerforth. Nobody ever presumed to hint disapproval of her actions, save this far-away relative, and when he ventured to do so she was immediately seized with a desire to show her disregard of an opinion which, in reality, she valued very highly. Presently she heard some words exchanged between the two men which were not noticed by the others.

"You look as surprised to see me here as if we had not met in a month, Herbert," said Jock Deerforth, with the drawl that was not affectation, but the result of a long struggle to overcome a lisp.

"I think you must be judging my feelings by your own," rejoined Herbert. Then they both laughed.

A sudden resolve crystallized in Mrs. Vincent's mind, and she at once acted on it. "Mr. Deerforth," she said, "as this is the first time I have had the pleasure of your company at dinner, you will be doomed to give me your arm. Mrs. Raynor, you can have Mr. Herbert to yourself, and as you are the man of the house, my dear, I shall go first! I will have no horrid English custom interfere with my feminine rights."

"Helen is in one of her moods—she has been for two days," Mrs. Raynor said, as she and Herbert walked far enough behind the other guests to speak freely—an old habit of theirs. "I am antiquated, wedded to precedents; I don't like eight men and four women at dinner."

"Helen is her own precedent, al-

ways," returned Herbert. "If she thinks she has surprised us, she will be happy. Who is that good-looking foreigner with Blanche Sinclair?"

"Count von Waldeck, a relative of the German Ambassador. Blanche met him in Washington a few weeks ago; she made him come on for the dinner and Madame Aguados's *mi-carême* ball."

"So Helen is consoling Deerforth? Blanche and he had a tremendous flirtation before you came back."

"I fancy he needs no consoling; from what I hear, it is Sinclair rather than Blanche who took to him. But, then, Blanche's flirtations are very short-lived. She does the most imprudent things, but just when people begin to gossip a new man comes to the front."

"Yes; she has no more idea of being in earnest than has a kitten," Herbert replied. "Everybody recognizes that, so no one ever censures her very severely; she is little more than a grown-up child—a naughty one."

"You couldn't say that for Helen."

"She would be furious if I did. The courage of her acts is one of Helen's strongest characteristics."

"She has been all wrong, somehow, ever since we got home," sighed Mrs. Raynor.

"And to let that Deerforth suppose from the way she behaves that he is to consider himself on a friendly footing in the house! There is one comfort—he is certain to receive an awful snub within a week."

"From present appearances," returned Herbert, calmly, "he will be in a position to snub you and me, rather than to receive any snub from Helen."

A very handsome man he was, this guest whose presence proved distasteful to Helen Vincent's best two friends. He possessed a gift of fascination that influenced his own sex as well as women; yet, in some indescribable fashion, nature had labeled him dangerous. He was not more than thirty, had made two fortunes

in Wall street, and at one time wagers were laid as to whether he would land among the billionaires or in Sing Sing. Now, however, there was no talk of his taking the latter journey. His wife had gone to Paris nearly a year before, and everybody expected her to institute proceedings for a divorce. In the meantime, Jock posed as the victim of her cold perfections and his own poetic sensibilities. He said there was nothing he wished so much as to have some good woman teach him to be good; and a great many women of various shades of goodness had attempted the task.

"It was so kind of you to invite me!" he said to his hostess. "I know you are prejudiced against me, which makes it all the kinder."

"That won't answer, Mr. Deerforth," Mrs. Vincent replied; "you will have to find something newer. Other people's opinions don't weigh a straw with me; my treatment will depend on yourself."

For a while there was no general conversation, but Mrs. Sinclair opened the way by saying, in her clear, soft voice: "You have found a very fair substitute for happiness, Helen: two men to each woman, and Adela Liscome's husband and mine safe in Florida."

"Why must husbands and mothers-in-law always be ill spoken of?" asked Jock Deerforth. "The *maters* are usually much nicer than their daughters and an American makes the most malleable husband that the heart of woman could desire."

Toward the close of the dinner a note was handed Mrs. Vincent, with the information that it required an immediate answer.

"From Madame Aguados," she said.

"Good heavens!" cried Mrs. Sinclair. "I am sure some dreadful thing has happened, and we shall be cheated out of our *mi-carême* ball."

"Not quite so bad," rejoined Mrs. Vincent, looking up from the page. "Mr. Surrey was to have led the

cotillion with me and he has chosen this occasion to sprain his ankle—so like a man!”

“Of course,” said Ralph Herbert; “and a woman always considers a man’s misfortune much worse than a crime.”

“It is as unpardonable as a blunder,” added Mrs. Sinclair. “What will madame do, Helen?”

“She asks me to select some one,” returned Mrs. Vincent, with a quick glance at Herbert, unnoticed by the others.

“The woods are full of boys whose brains have lodged in their heels,” that gentleman said to Mrs. Raynor, loudly enough to be heard by all.

Mrs. Sinclair looked up and met Jock Deerforth’s eyes.

“Mr. Deerforth is the best stepper I know,” she said, “and he really holds one well—which is more than can be granted for Archie Surrey.”

“And possibly my brains lodged in my heels, which would account for my never being able to find them,” rejoined Jock, with his pleasant laugh.

“Then will you make use of them in my behalf, Mr. Deerforth?” Mrs. Vincent cried, with more eagerness than she often displayed. “I shall be infinitely obliged, and so will madame.”

She looked defiantly at Herbert, but he was speaking to Mrs. Raynor, apparently oblivious of the fiery glance.

“And I shall be more happy than Mrs. Vincent,” said Deerforth, exulting inwardly.

Verily, the gods were fighting in his favor! Archie Surrey should have a tip to console him for his accident. Jock could be amazingly good-natured on occasion.

But never in his life had he been so surprised as he was by Mrs. Vincent—puzzled, too, and sorely afraid of being duped or deceived by his masculine vanity. He had expected pride and coldness, yet—vanity aside—their acquaintance began on the treacherous ground of incipient flirtation. What did she mean? Was she working for,

or against, Blanche Sinclair? Or was she attracted? But what was the use of wondering? At all events, he had his chance, and experience had taught him that in Wall street or a lady’s boudoir success, as a rule, meant taking advantage of the chance when it came.

He had sought to meet Helen before she went abroad, but had not succeeded in being presented. And now she was back, more beautiful than before, and here he was in her house, seated beside her. If only he could know that Ralph Herbert was pained as well as annoyed! Jock had never hated any other man as he hated that favorite of fortune, born to an unassailable position, powerful, the soul of honor and always so exasperatingly civil, yet holding him so completely at an immeasurable distance. And that company in which he was chief director, and that knowledge of its plans so necessary to Jock—he must obtain it! He was on the right track at last; then——

But dinner was over, and he heard Blanche Sinclair saying: “Now, don’t be English, Helen; show that Paris has contaminated you a little—these men don’t wish to smoke alone!”

“In the library, then,” returned Mrs. Vincent, leading the way as the doors of a room at the side were opened. “I know you and Adela wish your cigarettes.”

“You haven’t the weakness, Mrs. Vincent?” Deerforth asked, as the two ladies began to smoke.

Herbert was standing close by, and Mrs. Vincent saw him look at Deerforth with an expression which said plainly that the bare suggestion was an impertinence. This decided her answer.

“I have not the habit,” she replied, “but simply because I have no habits; I am too changeable to make any. I will have a cigarette now, though.”

She looked at Mrs. Raynor, but that sagacious lady, instead of betraying surprise or disapproval as Mrs. Vincent expected, appeared placidly indifferent.

"I am glad to see you smoke," Herbert said, when he could speak unheard by the others. "I decided some time since that you were deteriorating rapidly; it is always flattering to human vanity to have an impression confirmed."

"And I am charmed if I have offered yours fresh food—I know it is insatiable," she rejoined, in a lazy voice, belied by the expression of her eyes.

"Are you going to quarrel with me at this late day for telling you the truth?" he asked, half laughing.

"Oh, no! I am always glad when you are rude; it confirms my opinion of you, formed a long while ago," she retorted.

"I won't take this opportunity to ask what it is," Herbert said, somewhat seriously. "Oh, Helen, Helen, what a combination of common sense and unreasonableness you are!"

"Will you forgive me if I suggest that you are a little tiresome—just a little?" she rejoined. "Would you mind talking to Adela Liscome? Then I can have Mr. Deerforth to myself—that is what I asked him for."

That gentleman sauntered up at the instant, saying: "Mrs. Raynor has been abusing my trade, Mrs. Vincent! She declares that Nemesis—I think that was the name of the unpleasant old goddess—is lying in wait for all of us Wall-street wretches. Now I have a whole pantheon of deities, but not an ill-natured one among them."

"If you made less noise in your pandemonium, you might hear their mill sometimes," Mrs. Raynor called after him.

"Broken, long ago, I am sure," said Deerforth.

"No," rejoined Herbert, "the wheel keeps turning as silently, as relentlessly as ever. Mrs. Vincent, I must say good night."

His hostess nodded and vouchsafed him two fingers, over which he bowed with grave courtesy.

"Helen, make him promise to come to Madame Aguados's!" cried Mrs. Sinclair.

"He must," said Mrs. Vincent, "because I wish him to see Mr. Deerforth and myself in our triumph."

"Then my destiny is settled," returned Herbert.

As he was leaving the room, he heard Mrs. Vincent say, in a voice that she meant to be audible to his ears: "Now tell me about your pantheon, Mr. Deerforth! The gods must necessarily be old, but their devotee is new—to me."

Ralph Herbert sighed heavily as he stepped into his cab and drove away to his club. He made his appearance late at the ball, and exasperated Mrs. Vincent by his congratulations, and Jock Deerforth still more by his apparent indifference to the whole matter.

Mrs. Liscome managed to get into difficulty with her clothes, and Herbert covered her retreat into a window-recess, its thick curtains forming a screen behind which Mrs. Raynor put her in order. Blanche Sinclair flirted with her young German, until she turned his head more hopelessly than ever, and people's open curiosity added to the wicked little woman's enjoyment.

The brilliant figures took their course, and Deerforth devoted as much energy to making his temporary leadership a startling success as if it had been one of the daring speculations with which he had astonished the business world within the past few years.

The ball would rank among the season's triumphs, but the pretty scene looked tame and dull enough to Herbert.

"You might be Diogenes in modern dress," said Mrs. Raynor.

"The cynic wouldn't have lighted his lantern here," he answered. "I am tired and shall take my stupidity home. So, good night, wisest of women."

Ralph Herbert heard the clocks striking two as he mounted his own door-step. He lived down in Washington Square, in the house in which three generations of his family had lived before him. The size of the

mansion involved an establishment which it seemed absurd for a bachelor of five-and-thirty to keep up, but Herbert was both a conservative and an imaginative man. He would not allow strangers to live in the home he loved, and among his servants were several who had been there when he was born.

His temperament was an odd combination of the practical and poetic. He had studied both law and medicine and, though he practised neither profession, between literary pursuits and the personal management of his property—he was a very rich man, even for these days—he had ample occupation.

To-night he found himself in an unusual mood—depressed and inclined to be morbid over the one lack in his successful life, a lack undreamed of by others, yet keen enough to take the zest and savor out of existence, strong and well-balanced as his nature was.

"I needn't be an utter fool at my age," he said to himself, as he put his latch-key into the lock. "I have known since she was a girl that Helen would never care for me, and she has never dreamed that I care—she doesn't believe I could love anybody."

The lights were burning low in the halls and the old house was more than still. Herbert remembered that his valet had asked leave to stay with a sick relative, promising to return early in the morning. He went at once upstairs, for, though he often read till nearly daylight, this was always in his dressing-room. He was so methodical in his habits that the servants knew he never entered the library after he had been out in the evening. His own apartments looked bright and inviting. He made himself comfortable in smoking-jacket and slippers, and sat down to read. But he could not rest; his mind fastened itself persistently on one thought—Helen Vincent. Suddenly he was seized with an irresistible desire to look at a miniature, painted when she was a young girl, that hung in a little room off the library.

He went down-stairs, smiling at his

own folly, pushed back the portières and entered the darkened room, taking out his match-safe to light the gas. But there was a light in his study—he could see it distinctly through the curtains that hung over the arch. He stepped cautiously forward; his slippered feet made no sound on the thick carpet. Through a gap in the draperies he could look into the room beyond.

He saw first that the door of a safe set into the wall was open; then, by a table, at a short distance, he saw his valet seated, busily engaged in copying a paper spread out before him. The man worked swiftly, and Herbert watched in silence until the paper was replaced in its envelope and deftly sealed. Herbert waited while the man put the safe in perfect order and was about to close the door; then he said, composedly:

"You can leave that, Soper."

The man turned and saw his master standing by the table. The poor wretch in his abject terror grasped a chair for support, but his legs gave way and he fell on the floor. When he could raise himself, Herbert said: "Sit down—don't try to speak yet."

He lighted a cigar and began to smoke, while the man stared at him, shaking from head to foot, making no effort to stir from the chair into which he had sunk.

A carafe of half-frozen water was on the table; Herbert poured out a glass and set it within reach of the fellow, who had to try several times before he could hold the tumbler and manage to swallow. The hereditary servility of the trained English servant was so ingrained in him that his first words, half-unconsciously spoken, were fairly ludicrous under the circumstances.

"I beg pardon for making you so much trouble, sir," he said, as well as his chattering teeth would permit.

"It seems to be I who am making you trouble, Soper," returned Herbert; "I may have to make you more—that will depend on yourself."

"Sir, sir, it is the first time——"

"Because you could not find the duplicate key before. You have been

very persevering and more than ingenious to find it at all."

"I—I suppose you mean to send me to prison, sir," Soper groaned.

"I have no such intention at present," returned Herbert, still tranquilly smoking. "Of course, you have not done this for yourself—you could get no good out of it that way."

"No, sir—no, sir! And you have been a kind master——"

"Drop that, Soper! What I wish is to know who hired you—though I am sure already. That paper you copied—no, I don't wish it—was minutes connected with the Iota Company."

Soper nodded, in speechless misery.

"Just now the thing is to make a clean breast of it. You told me once you were trying to save money to go to Australia—I am going to give you the chance, later, between that and Sing Sing."

Soper could only groan again.

"You have been bought at a good price—you are too weak to have the making of an independent criminal in you. Now, I propose to let you earn your money from the man who hired you—and I, too, mean to pay you, if you do exactly as I wish."

"Anything, sir, if you will have mercy. But, sir, if he finds out——"

"Of course, he has a hold on you. But, don't you see, he will be helpless when, between us, I have got him in my fingers!"

"Only tell me what to do, sir!"

"Make a clean breast of it! Sit still and get your miserable wits back, while I look at something."

Herbert stood for a while with his back turned on the wretched man, studying the miniature; then he looked around and said: "You can talk quietly now, Soper; I am ready to listen."

II

It was one of Mrs. Vincent's busy mornings with her secretary and her voluminous daily correspondence. She would have been incensed if anybody had called her a philanthropist, but

no one could have employed a great fortune in a wiser or more practical way than did she.

Nearly four weeks had passed since *mi-carême*, and during that time Deerforth had been an assiduous visitor at her house. In the beginning she had wished to please Blanche and, if she could, vex Ralph Herbert, though she knew in advance that his annoyance would hurt her. But, so far from showing disapproval, he seemed profoundly indifferent, and that was still harder to bear. She was so much occupied with the possible effect of her conduct on Ralph that she did not take into consideration, as she would ordinarily have done, the manner in which it might strike Deerforth. She liked him, too—his almost boyish impulsiveness seemed so genuine—and the consciousness that she had been prejudiced against him made her wish to offer amends.

Accustomed as she was to adulation, she seldom gave men credit for being serious, and she never dreamed that Deerforth would presume to fall in love with her. Nevertheless, he had done so, and had begun to dream of a possible future that looked more entrancing than any other he had ever imagined—so many divorced men and women in society had married again! Now, for the first time, he longed for freedom as eagerly as did his wife. She should have her divorce, if he could be sure of winning Mrs. Vincent—and her millions; though, to do Jock justice, it must be admitted that he would have been eager to marry her if she had not possessed a penny.

He was more wildly in love than he had ever been in his life, and between his engrossing passion and his business schemes he was busy enough. Both in his dreams and his plots the thought of defeating Ralph Herbert had always a prominent place.

Mrs. Vincent was interrupted by a note from Deerforth, accompanied by a rare old book that she had wished to see. Sending the volume made an excuse for writing, and a request for some foreign address she had promised

to give him obliged her to answer the witty little epistle.

She had scarcely settled to work again when she was called to the telephone by Blanche Sinclair. She had to listen to various half-finished, excited sentences, while her questions received exasperatingly incoherent answers. But she made out that her cousin was coming to her house at once and must see her alone, on a matter of the greatest importance. Blanche was evidently in a state of intense excitement, but Helen was too accustomed to seeing her excited over the merest trifle to feel particularly anxious, although the little lady announced that the world had come to an end. Still, as the two had been at a dinner together the night before, with Blanche in her highest spirits, radiant in a wickedly extravagant gown, it was difficult to believe that anything very terrible had happened in the interval.

Mrs. Vincent changed her mind, however, when, half an hour later, Blanche entered the boudoir, white as a ghost, her eyes dilated with terror and suffering. She did not weep and give way to hysterics, as most pink-and-white creatures would have done, and her very self-control was a proof to Helen of the gravity of the situation.

Helen made her cousin sit down; then she said quietly, in a voice full of sympathy and tenderness: "Tell me as soon as you can. Whatever I can do, I will—you know that. Only, tell me all—everything."

"I must—but you will never forgive me," shivered Blanche. She struggled hard to retain her self-control and, when she could speak, said, in a half-whisper: "Sydney will be home to-night; he writes that he wants—he wants——"

Her voice died in an inarticulate murmur. Helen was on her knees now by the trembling woman and put both arms protectingly about her, saying:

"I know it is nothing you need be afraid to tell me, dear; it isn't the

story we have both heard so often from other women."

"No—no! But, oh, Helen, it is so terrible! I won't sit here and choke like a frightened baby! Don't look at me! He wants some bonds he left with me to send to the bank—he had forgotten them till just as he was leaving home, and—and——"

"And you can't find them—you didn't send them? But they can't be lost! Don't be so frightened, Blanche!"

"I—what is the word?" She put her hands helplessly to her head. "Helen, I raised money on them——"

"You hypothecated them, you mean?"

Blanche nodded, her face hidden in her hands.

"And—they were not his—but I did not know when I used them——"

"They can be got back. How much money did you get?"

"Ten thousand dollars——"

"Who has them?" Mrs. Vincent demanded, imperatively; "don't hesitate."

"Wait—let me tell it in my way—I shall die if you are angry! I—I—played again at that dreadful club—I owed Mrs. Ransom two thousand—you know what a harpy she is! And I had taken some flyers in—oh, I forget! I had to raise ten thousand dollars—and Jock Deerforth——"

"Don't say you borrowed money from him! And, if he persuaded you to gamble in stocks, he never enters my doors again."

"No—no! He advised me not to! But I had to have the money that very day—it was just before you came back—I didn't know which way to turn. I remembered the bonds—I had meant to take them to the bank—but I had forgotten."

"And you thought you could replace them in time?"

"Yes—I was sure of making a large sum—and everything fell through—I have lost nearly ten thousand more. But the bonds! If I don't

have them, I must tell Sydney, and he will never forgive me!"

"It will be easy enough to get them—we can telephone to the man who holds them. He can send them up here and receive his money."

"But that is why I am so frightened! It is Saturday; nobody is in Wall street after twelve—it is nearly that now. I only had Sydney's letter by the second post."

"I shall telephone. Who is the man? what is his number?"

"I must send to Deerforth——"

"You said it was not he. Oh, Blanche, don't tell me half-truths!"

"I am telling the truth. He attended to raising the money—I don't know the man's name. Indeed, indeed, I would not have taken it from Jock."

"Well, I shall telephone to him. Tell me what bonds they were. I telephone too often to all sorts of men about business to have it make any difference if anybody overhears. I shall ask him to send them at once."

Blanche followed her into the next room, looking like another creature than the frightened woman of a few moments before. Helen would help her—she did not even seem angry, or, worse, contemptuous; so Blanche could be at ease. With her, repose of conscience meant not losing other people's esteem, especially that of her husband and Helen, of whose directness and rigid ideas as to truth and honesty she stood greatly in awe.

Mrs. Vincent paused as she was about to ring the telephone bell.

"Your fright made me lose my common sense," she said. "Since it is Saturday you are safe enough; Sydney cannot send to the bank until Monday."

"But Mr. Ames—that's the president—is coming to the house to-night. Sydney will tell him he wants the bonds, then it will all come out."

"Oh, in that case, look up the telephone number of Mr. Deerforth's office!"

The answer came that Mr. Deerforth had already left—he was going directly home. The clerk was certain,

because Mr. Deerforth was expecting a telegram, which he had ordered to be sent to him the moment it arrived; he had said he would wait until it came.

"Then I am lost!" moaned Blanche, dropping into a chair, as limp and miserable as when she arrived. "It is twelve now—he can't get the things to-day—I shall die or go crazy!"

"I think I shall shake you in a moment!" cried Mrs. Vincent. "Of course, Mr. Deerforth will manage to get them! Only, we must see him—I can't telephone all the particulars."

Again the answer to a question brought a disappointment. Mr. Deerforth had not come in; he was certain, however, to be there within half an hour, as he had a business appointment. Blanche was in the depths of despair. She knew that, if they waited till he could come to them, it would be too late, and she was so frantic that she fairly infected her cousin with her terror.

"We will take the elevated down to Forty-second street and drive to his house," Helen said. "Pleasant gossip it will make if anybody sees us—and some one is sure to see us—but at least we shall save time. I can be ready in five minutes. Stop trembling and help me to dress; I don't wish Agatha to see you looking like this. Do learn to have the courage of your acts!"

"If you begin to be angry and scold me, I shall be utterly helpless," the little woman vowed, ready to give way to hysterics if there were no other means of avoiding a lecture.

"It is useless to scold—for you regard any advice as a scolding—I learned that a long while ago," Mrs. Vincent said, already busy putting on a street gown. "I shall say just one thing, hard-hearted as you will think it. This is the last gaming debt I shall ever help you about; but, if you will agree not to speculate again, I will add to the allowance Sydney makes you, though heaven knows it is large enough to satisfy two sane women—if there are two in the world."

"I do believe I shall hate the very word 'speculate' as long as I live,"

Blanche declared. "If only I can get safely out of this scrape, I will let nothing tempt me again."

"At least, I would advise you not to meddle with other people's property," said Mrs. Vincent, drily; "there is so strong and general a prejudice against it that doing so sometimes proves a short road to prison."

"What awful things you say, Helen! I am sure I did not think I was doing anything so very dreadful when I took the bonds. I meant to put them back; it seemed just borrowing from my husband."

"But you have not been able to redeem them, and they were not his!"

"Oh, how cruel of you to remind me! I was feeling easier; now I am more frightened than ever. I shall go mad—I know I shall!"

She rushed up and down the room in a frenzy, which, Helen knew, was not acting. She knew Blanche would forget her misery as soon as she was out of her strait; and she could no more be made to comprehend the enormity of her deed than if she had been a butterfly.

By the time they were driving to the elevated road her cousin's comforting assurances had restored Blanche's hopefulness, and she chattered almost as volubly as usual.

"You and Sydney have such odd ideas," she said, in answer to some remark of Mrs. Vincent's. "Sydney cares no more about my flirting than if I were my own grandmother; but the least tiny fib makes him furious!"

"He knows that your flirtations never last long enough to be dangerous; besides, there is something in you that would never let you go wrong, partly because you are not capable of what is called passion—odious word! Then, too, you love Sydney better than you could love anybody except Blanche Sinclair."

"And I love you, too, Helen. If only you and Sydney would not make me so afraid of you! I'm not afraid of any one else! You both scare me into—into—prevarication, very often."

"I admire your ingenuity in choosing your word; but take care you in-

dulge in none about present matters, if you have borrowed money from Mr. Deerforth—or if you have kept anything back. I began to invite him because you asked me to—and I do not think he is half so black as he is painted; but, Blanche, if there is anything you have kept back, own it now; let us settle matters completely."

"Only let me get the bonds, and I shall be the happiest creature in the world!" returned Mrs. Sinclair. "Yes, Jock—oh, Mr. Deerforth, is a very good fellow—if you don't make him angry. Helen, I think Ralph Herbert is furious at your seeing so much of Jock—though one never can tell what he really feels."

"Nothing whatever; he is too well-balanced to indulge in feelings," Mrs. Vincent said, in a tone which she meant to make scornful, but which was only angry and hurt. She added, quickly: "Alice Raynor and Ralph went off on some expedition a little while before you came."

"Nobody ever had such a sister-in-law as she is!" cried Blanche. "She is not a bit strait-laced, though she is so good."

"We have lived together for nearly five years, and I grow fonder of her every day," Mrs. Vincent replied; "but we never meddle with each other."

"And she has plenty of money. You are the two luckiest women in the world," cried Blanche. "Still, I am very well content to keep my Sydney. Oh, if only I have those awful things ready to give him! I sha'n't mind owning that I was careless in forgetting to send them to the bank."

"How amiable of you, to be willing to admit even as much as that!"

Then Blanche had another shivering attack, and when once more consoled, by the assurance that everything should be set right, began to talk gaily again, while Helen sat wondering how such a bundle of inconsistencies managed to hold itself together.

When they had left the train and were driving rapidly through the streets, Blanche grew silent. Mrs. Vincent had leisure to reflect that to

go to Deerforth's house was a proceeding likely to be censured by their most indulgent friends, but she was not a woman to hesitate after she had made up her mind. Then she indulged in bitter thoughts in regard to the meanness and sycophancy of the social world. Because she had a colossal fortune and was a power in society on both sides of the Atlantic, she could with impunity take a step that would have brought dire calamity on the head of another woman.

There was one person who would blame her severely enough—Ralph Herbert; and when she thought of that she would have gone on at any cost. She hoped he would hear of it—he should, if she had to tell him herself. He was always blaming and underrating her, and she was glad to afford him such good reason.

"We shall have to go in," she said, suddenly. "We must explain matters where there is no chance of being overheard."

"It isn't a bachelor apartment-house," Blanche replied; "the Gordons live there and several other persons we know. Jock has a beautiful apartment on the ground floor—he gave a charming dinner early in the Winter to me and Sydney. We have been there to suppers, too."

"Well, we are going now," rejoined Mrs. Vincent, with an emphasis and defiance due to her thought of Ralph Herbert.

"Don't speak as if you were angry with me," pleaded her cousin. "I do appreciate your goodness—I'll never try you in this way again."

"My dear, I was not thinking of you—and I am not angry. If you have told me everything, very well; there is nothing so dangerous and so exasperating as half-truths; downright falsehoods do much less harm."

"Here we are!" Blanche exclaimed, as the carriage stopped.

III

WHILE Mrs. Vincent had been preparing for her undesirable expedition,

Jock Deerforth reached his house. As he got out of the cab he saw Herbert's valet mounting the steps. Before the man could ring the bell, Deerforth was at his side, saying, sternly:

"I told you never to come here, Soper."

"Yes, sir; but Mr. Herbert sent me with a note for Mrs. Gordon—and I have some news for you, sir," replied Soper, lifting his hat.

"Don't ring; I have my key," said Deerforth.

There was no one in the hall as they entered. Deerforth let himself into his own apartment and led the way to his dressing-room.

"I copied this last night, sir," said Soper, softly, as he removed a paper from his pocket.

Deerforth took it, read the page quickly, and said, in a satisfied tone:

"That is all right; it confirms the other information you obtained. You have done very well, Soper—very well; I sha'n't want anything more of you."

"I am glad both ways, sir," Soper answered, in his cringing fashion.

"I dare say you are," Deerforth said, indifferently.

He crossed the room to where an odd, antique cabinet stood, the receptacle for his most private letters, and laid the paper carefully away. From another compartment he took a sheaf of bank-notes, counted out several and went back.

"You will find me better than my word, Soper," he said, as he sat down at a writing-table. "I promised you two thousand dollars—here they are, and five hundred additional. You can go to Australia, or the—anywhere you like—if you are tired of Mr. Herbert. You are an invaluable man; but I won't engage you myself, if you think of leaving your present place."

"Yes, sir; thank you, sir," Soper replied, in his most respectful tone. "And since you are satisfied, sir, may I remind you of the letter you were to give me back, if I succeeded in

finding out what you wanted to know?"

"You assumed that I was to do so, Soper," Deerforth said, as he lighted a cigarette. "All things considered, I propose to keep the little document."

Jock loved power in any form; he derived a certain satisfaction in watching the effect of his words on the wretched man, who turned a queer, greenish white between anger and fear.

"I thought, sir," he said, moistening his dry lips with his tongue, "I thought my having the letter was part of the bargain."

"Was that your idea?" questioned his tormentor, blowing out a succession of smoke-rings. "The letter is quite safe with me, Soper—I should never use it unless you were to force me to do so, say by any threat or attempt at coercion, as if you fancied our little transaction had given you a hold on me."

"But—Mr. Deerforth—sir!"

The pleading face and threatening eyes only confirmed Deerforth in his resolve, and he said, with his slight drawl accentuated, as it always was when he meant to be unpleasant: "There isn't anything more to say, Soper. I am a very prudent man, and you have prudence enough to appreciate the fact, even if, in this instance, it does cause you a disappointment."

"But, sir, I am going to leave the country—nothing could ever bring me back to America."

"It is only the dead that one can be certain will never return, Soper," said Deerforth, smiling amiably. "If I were to receive the melancholy news of your departure from this mundane sphere, I should burn at once every trace of evidence that could cast a blemish on your character."

"I should think a gentleman——"

"Don't finish, Soper! You are excited and might say something you would regret," interrupted Deerforth, still smiling. "You'd better go now; I am busy this morning. If I can ever

do anything for you, let me know—a recommendation, or any matter of that sort."

The eyes of the two men met—the polished man of the world, with the tiger instincts in him as powerful as they had been in some prehistoric ancestor; and the descendant of a long down-trodden class, a creature whom heredity had stamped with the treachery and cowardice of a dog-wolf. The eyes of the weaker animal speedily fell under the other's glance, and Soper crept stealthily out of the room without a word.

Deerforth finished his cigarette, then read again the notes which his visitor had brought, and put them away in a compartment of the cabinet, feeling a thrill of satisfaction as the spring-lock snapped under the pressure of his long, slender fingers that were supple and strong as steel.

"Of course, your company must buy up the Nemerick road, Mr. Ralph Herbert," was his thought, as he lighted a fresh cigarette. "The shortest one you could build to your mine would be three miles longer and ruinously expensive! You have shown your wisdom in impressing that on the directors! I'd like to see your face when you learn that Jock Deerforth is the Nemerick Company in his own person, and that you must accept his terms. Besides the cost of a new road, you couldn't get it in running order by the time your lease demands that the mine shall be in full blast. A week from to-day, Mr. Herbert—just a week from to-day—you shall find yourself beaten as you never were in your life—and it sha'n't be my last triumph over you."

He passed into the library and met his butler, who was carrying some letters.

"I did not know you were in, sir," the man said; "I was going to lay these on your table. A telegram from the office, sir—and, oh, there came a telephone message——"

"Damn the telephone message!" Deerforth exclaimed, catching up the telegram and tearing it open.

"Yes, sir, but——"

"Go out!" ordered Deerforth, in a voice that sent the man away as quickly as if he had been impelled by some unseen power.

Jock read the message—more completely satisfactory than he had ventured to hope. His face beamed like a boy's. What luck he was having of late! every scheme prospered! In spite of his vaunted prudence, Jock was one of the most impulsive of men; half his bold ventures were the result of momentary daring; his evil deeds, like his good actions, were seldom premeditated. It is very possible that, if the discomfited Soper had been inspired to defer his visit till this moment, he might have carried away the damning evidence for which he would willingly have bartered his soul.

Jock's thoughts flew on to Mrs. Vincent. He had beaten Herbert—he would win another victory over him, for the fellow loved the beautiful woman. No one else suspected—even her keen womanly intuitions had failed to warn Helen herself—but Jock was sure—sure!

And, while he stood there dreaming, Mrs. Vincent and Blanche Sinclair had descended at his door.

The janitor was standing on the steps as they went up. He believed that Mr. Deerforth had not returned, but he ushered the ladies into the hall, just as a boy in buttons was coming out of a small reception-room. A very frightened small boy he was at the moment. He had been sent into the room by the butler with a vase of flowers and, while examining something on the table, had upset a bottle of ink over the green-and-white cover; now he was rushing in search of means to repair the misfortune as best he might. He was nearly in tears when he showed the ladies in, and the state of the table made the cause of his agitation evident.

"You spilled the ink," Mrs. Vincent said, kindly; "never mind—I will ask Mr. Deerforth to forgive you. Give him this card."

"Oh, don't touch your jacket!" cried Mrs. Sinclair. "You have made a great black spot already!"

Mrs. Vincent laid the card on a little tray, and the lad hurried away with it. But he dared not face the butler till he had washed his hands, and he escaped into a side passage that led to the servants' quarters.

"I hope we needn't wait," Blanche said. "If somebody should come!"

"I told you a little while ago that one must have the courage of one's acts," returned Mrs. Vincent.

"Yes—but—I was so frightened! As we came up the steps, a lady and gentleman turned the corner—oh, Helen, it looked like Alice and Ralph Herbert—indeed, it did!"

"He is not a bogey that you can frighten me with," Mrs. Vincent said, haughtily. "My actions are none of Mr. Herbert's business, and his opinion of them is of no importance to me."

The murmur of voices reached Jock Deerforth's ear in the library, and he waited a moment for a servant to appear with the visitors' names. None came, but he heard the voices again—women's voices. He stepped quickly toward the doors that led into the reception-room, and, as he turned the knob, Mrs. Raynor and Ralph Herbert entered from the hall. Blanche gave a gasping cry, and Helen stood looking full at the pair. Her face grew somewhat pale, though the expression of her eyes showed that it was from anger, not alarm.

Before any one could speak, Deerforth opened the library door and stood regarding the four with a surprise that he could not conceal.

"It looks as if we had come to act an impromptu charade, Deerforth," Ralph Herbert said, laughingly. "Mrs. Sinclair wished to speak to you, so we all came in!"

"I am only too happy to see you," Jock replied, smiling at Mrs. Vincent.

"How do you do, Mr. Deerforth?" that lady inquired, extending her hand as he reached her side. "It is I, not Mrs. Sinclair, who wishes to speak to you—by yourself, too, please."

Take me into another room—these friendly guardians can wait here, unless they lose patience.”

“We will go into the library,” said Jock, sorely puzzled, but able now to hide his astonishment and seem only delighted to see his guests.

As Mrs. Vincent took his proffered arm she glanced again at Herbert. This time the expression in her eyes was like that with which a duelist might regard his opponent as their swords cross in preparatory salute. She received in return for her fiery glance a smile, half-amused, half of the forbearance with which a wise elder might receive the petulant outburst of a spoiled child.

“We never lose patience,” he said, gaily.

“And it is such a pretty room to wait in!” added Mrs. Raynor.

“And I wish you were both in Jericho,” said Blanche Sinclair; but she did not make her polite wish audible.

“Somebody has been doing an ink drawing on the table-cover,” observed Herbert. “It looks like a map of South America.”

“That, also,” rejoined Mrs. Vincent, “I shall explain—to Mr. Deerforth.”

Jock’s heart beat a triumphant quickstep as he led her away. Helen’s composure had quieted Blanche Sinclair’s fright; but, lest Mrs. Raynor or Herbert might ask some embarrassing question, she elected to feign displeasure at their appearance. She turned her back on them both, sat down at the table and pretended to write a letter; but, as neither paid any attention, she soon grew tired of scribbling incoherent sentences and joined in their conversation with her usual volubility.

Mrs. Vincent and Deerforth appeared in the course of twenty minutes, and a glance from the former told Blanche that everything had been satisfactorily settled.

“I am glad you have done with your mysteries,” she cried, gaily.

“I am sorry Mrs. Vincent has an engagement,” Deerforth said; “I

wished you all to see the Greuze I picked up last Autumn in France.”

He looked at Mrs. Sinclair as he spoke, and she answered in her pretty, impulsive fashion: “You might invite us all to luncheon some day, and we could admire it at our leisure.”

“Oh, if you would come!” Jock exclaimed, with an eagerness equal to hers. “Do say you will, Mrs. Vincent.”

“It sounds too pleasantly bohemian to refuse,” she replied, looking at Herbert to read disapproval in his face; but she met only polite indifference.

“Then, Mrs. Raynor, if you will say ‘yes,’” pleaded Deerforth, in his most persuasive voice, “Herbert will be obliged to come.”

“Certainly,” Mrs. Raynor said; “my years will add an element of respectability to the affair.”

“Won’t that be a drawback?” Herbert asked, pleasantly; whereupon Blanche Sinclair threw her card-case at him, and Mrs. Vincent shot him an angry glance.

“Invite Adela Liscome, but no other women,” said Mrs. Sinclair. “A few additional men might not be a bad idea.”

“They need not all have German titles, I suppose?” Jock said, inquiringly. “By the way, Count von Waldeck will be back next week—perhaps you did not know that?”

“I shall believe it if I see him at your luncheon,” she replied. “But we have set no day.”

“We will let Mr. Deerforth do that, since he is a busy man,” rejoined Mrs. Vincent; “only, it must not be before Thursday.”

“How would Saturday suit?—but it is an awfully long way off.” The women agreed on that day, and Deerforth added to Herbert: “How about you? Has that blessed company of yours any meeting?”

“I shall be free by two o’clock,” Herbert replied. “There will be a meeting early—I believe to decide whether or not the company secures the old railway.”

Mrs. Vincent marveled to hear him say even so much about his affairs to

Deerforth, who listened with his eyes fixed on the stained table-cover, afraid to look up lest they should betray his secret exultation.

When the visitors were gone, Jock Deerforth whispered to himself: "Only a week! Ralph Herbert, you will be the most welcome guest that ever sat down at my table, and I'll beat you worse yet, before we have done."

IV

ANOTHER Saturday had come at last, though it seemed to Jock Deerforth that it never would arrive. It was near the hour for his guests to appear, and Jock felt as excited as a school-boy waiting for the distribution of prizes, the best of which were certain to fall to his share. No woman could have been more nervously anxious that everything, from the arrangement of the rooms to the table decorations, should be perfect. He had called in a painter to suggest artistic effects, had bought some new hangings for his library at that autocrat's bidding—marvelous things, in price as well as in picturesqueness—and the flowers and palms made the apartment seem a miniature Garden of Eden.

Jock meant Mrs. Vincent's first experience as his guest to be memorable; it would be so to another of his visitors, but in a different fashion. Ralph Herbert had never sat at Jock's table, or invited Jock to his house, though the relations between them were always pleasant enough. Jock had never been able to rid himself of an uneasy feeling that Herbert's steady eyes looked straight into his soul, and of late he had grown to hate the man, partly because of Mrs. Vincent, partly because it is human nature to hate those whom one tries to wrong.

But to-day was to witness his first triumph over Herbert; his enemy would be forced to accept the terms he might offer, and his feelings changed in consequence. To have outwitted Herbert was a pleasure to con-

template, as keen as the thought of the immense financial success it included, and Jock began to despise the other for having been tricked. Of the means he had employed, Jock did not even think—nothing but failure or detection could have made his own turpitude apparent to his mind.

A cathedral clock in the anteroom struck two, and the chime reached Deerforth's ears as he entered his library. Von Waldeck and a couple of other men were the first arrivals; presently another man appeared; Herbert would complete the number of the masculine guests. Jock longed to see his face and read therein the discomfiture and anger which even his practised self-control would not be able wholly to conceal.

The four ladies arrived together and, charming as Deerforth's reception of them all was, he managed to make it apparent that the whole affair was really in Mrs. Vincent's honor and that her approval was his touchstone of content.

"I did not dream that we were to be ushered into fairyland," she said, with a smile that fairly made Jock dizzy.

"And then these men dare to talk as if their bachelor abodes were as dreary as the cell of an anchorite!" cried Mrs. Raynor.

"Oh, Deerforth is a magician," von Waldeck declared. "You must not judge us ordinary poor fellows by him."

"Have you any special grievance this morning?" Blanche Sinclair asked, with a mischievous smile, as she seated herself at a little distance from the general group.

The young German followed her, and they began a low-voiced conversation. When Mrs. Sinclair chose to flirt with a man, onlookers were of no more consequence in her eyes than the figures of the wall-paper.

"What has become of Mr. Herbert?" demanded Mrs. Liscome, impersonally, as she glanced anxiously in a mirror, beset as usual by the fear that some portion of her attire might be getting awry.

"He is certain to be here in a moment," Deerforth answered; "one might look for the end of the world if Herbert were late."

But ten minutes passed without that gentleman's appearance, and Jock proposed that they should look at the Greuze, instead of waiting until after luncheon, as he had intended. The picture stood on an easel in a delightful little snugger, off one end of the library. It was the head of a young girl, with laughing mouth and wistful eyes, altogether bewitching. Von Waldeck declared that it might almost be taken for a portrait of Mrs. Sinclair, and all agreed as to the resemblance.

"I am vain enough in all conscience," that lady avowed, "but not to the extent of believing myself as pretty as that."

"She knows she is prettier," Deerforth said to Mrs. Vincent, for he had discovered that she was exceedingly fond of the spoiled creature and liked to hear her praised and admired.

"And she knows that we know she knows it," said Mrs. Raynor, as Helen smiled assent to Deerforth's remark.

"She is like my small son," added Mrs. Liscome; "he asked me why I did not take him in earnest when he made believe so hard."

"Oh, Mrs. Sinclair is always in earnest when she makes believe," rejoined Mrs. Vincent, laughing.

"Do you hear that, count?" called Deerforth.

But the count had returned to the library with Mrs. Sinclair. The smiles of the atrocious little flirt had reduced the impressionable young German to that agreeable stage of imbecility wherein the briefest tête-à-tête became a priceless boon. The others moved away, and Mrs. Vincent and Deerforth were left standing alone.

"I have had no opportunity to thank you," she said, at once; "I wish to do so now. You were very, very kind. I am afraid you had to journey down-town on Saturday to get those papers; but I received them within two hours. All those tiresome

people about, both times I have seen you since, prevented my saying half I wished to say."

"It was very little trouble," Jock replied; "I wish it had been more—it would have added to the pleasure of trying to oblige you; but really I deserve no thanks on the first score. It will always be the greatest possible favor if you will call on me when there is anything I can do in your service." Then he laughed—it was easy for him to laugh to-day. "All that sounds so ridiculously stilted; but you believe me, don't you?"

"Certainly I do, in spite of our belonging to an unbelieving generation; and it is very pleasant."

"And you can, always! Indeed, indeed, Mrs. Vincent, I am a very different fellow at bottom from what so many people think me."

"I have already discovered that," she replied.

"And you do like me a little?" persisted Jock, in the boyish fashion that was one of his fortunate gifts. "Please say 'yes'—but not unless you can do it in downright earnest!"

"Certainly I like you—a great deal better than I expected to," she said, frankly. "I am glad of it; people whom one really likes do not happen along too frequently."

"And I'm as weak as a child about wanting to be liked," cried Jock. "In spite of appearances, I am an absurdly sensitive animal, actually cursed with feelings; they have been awfully trampled on, but they will retain their vitality. I'm not complaining, you understand! I hate a chap that goes about whimpering for sympathy. And I don't pretend to be good, but I'm neither bad-hearted nor unscrupulous—in spite of what people may say."

The speech was both impulsive and artful. Jock's intuitions were almost feminine in their acuteness, and he had studied Mrs. Vincent closely during the past weeks. He appreciated the fact that she was very different from the ordinary woman of society; not only exceptionally clever, but warm-hearted and imaginative under her

polished manner and playful cynicism. She was a lonely woman, too, he realized, notwithstanding her troops of friends and admirers—an unsatisfied woman, despite countless benefits that fate had lavished on her.

Her clear, honest eyes were fixed full on him as he spoke, but she did not answer at once.

"I wish I'd held my tongue!" he cried, with a show of whimsical impatience. "A man need never expect to be believed when he tells the truth. But you might at least say what you are thinking."

"It was this: if you had said that when we first became acquainted, I should have thought you were talking for effect."

"But you do not now?"

"Since I told you that I liked you—I am not given to suspecting my friends when they speak seriously."

"The word seems to mean so much when you say it," Jock said, far too wise to venture on the slightest approach toward sentiment. "I believe I am a better man already for knowing you—you take the place of an ideal. There is an atmosphere about you—now, don't laugh—that would make a man ashamed of his ordinary life, even if it were better and held higher aims than most men's lives can boast."

Just then a servant came through the archway, holding out a salver with a note on it.

"Herbert's writing!" Jock exclaimed. "What has happened? You permit?" He read the page hastily, and added: "Why, he can't come! Oh, by Jove, isn't that altogether too awfully awful!"

"He gives a reason, I suppose?" Mrs. Vincent asked, with a shade too much indifference to be genuine; but Jock was too busy with his own whirling thoughts to notice, quick as he was.

"Here it is." And he read aloud:

"DEAR MR. DEERFORTH:

"I am more than sorry to be forced to seem an utter savage, but I find at the last moment that it will be impossible for me to get up-town in time for your luncheon. I cannot leave until our session ends, and we have

some unexpected matters that must be settled. You know too well what business is not to recognize the validity of my excuse, and I am sure you can easily believe in the sincerity of my regrets.

"I shall still be in season to have a look at the Greuze before your party breaks up, and to tell you again how very sorry I am at my unexpected detention.

"Very truly yours,

"RALPH HERBERT."

"Perhaps he will explain why he did not telephone," was all the remark Mrs. Vincent vouchsafed, as Deerforth looked up from the note.

"Oh, that would be too unceremonious for Herbert," laughed Deerforth. "But he knew his note would be here in time. I met him this morning; he said he was afraid he might be late, and I told him that half-past two would be early enough. I had named two o'clock, because as a rule Mrs. Sinclair is half an hour behind time."

"You are to be envied that picture," Mrs. Vincent said, and Jock longed to offer it to her, but did not venture to do so.

"We shall be forced to lunch without Herbert," Deerforth said, as they entered the library.

Everybody expressed regrets, which were sincere enough—even Jock's. He had wished Herbert to see Mrs. Vincent at his table. But he was exulting over the reason which had detained Herbert. He knew that the directors had been forced to accept the terms offered by the Nemerick Company, and he was convinced that Herbert's chagrin had been so great that he wished a little time to recover himself. Perhaps he had learned already that the Nemerick Company was consolidated in his, Jock's, own person. Under certain contingencies the agent who was managing the affair had received permission to reveal the fact, though, if he could, Jock wished to keep it a secret for a while.

"Some one can take Mr. Herbert's place, but no one can supply his absence," Count von Waldeck said, as the party went into the dining-room.

"Nobody can have his place even,"

returned Deerforth, as he led Mrs. Vincent to the table, adding to her: "He was to have sat next to you."

Only the butler and his satellites knew that this statement was the inspiration of the moment. It struck Jock that he could talk more freely with Mrs. Vincent if the seat at her right was vacant.

"Mr. Deerforth will have to be himself and Ralph Herbert also," said Mrs. Liscome, gathering her draperies about her.

"What a combination!" exclaimed Blanche Sinclair.

"A very fortunate one," said Mrs. Raynor.

"You mean for me," rejoined Jock, who suspected strongly that he did not rank among the lady's favorites.

"Oh, no; for your right-hand neighbor."

"I am very well content," Mrs. Vincent said, laughingly.

"That's such a mild, old-fashioned way of putting it," cried Mrs. Sinclair. "You might have said it was glorious, or deliriously jolly, or——"

"Oh, no; I might not," Mrs. Vincent replied, as her cousin paused for another exaggerated specimen of modern inelegance.

"She hates any approach to slang," continued Mrs. Sinclair, "though conversation without it is as commonplace as an oyster without red pepper."

"I am awfully sorry that Sydney had to leave town last night," Deerforth said to her; "I wished so much to have him here."

"That's very proper of you," she replied; "for my own part, I am resigned—I think that is as neat as Mrs. Vincent's decorous expression. But, then, I have been married two years," she added, with a smile at the young German.

"I have always thought Sydney a bold man to undertake you; still, he has managed to survive so far," said Mrs. Raynor.

"How about the twelve disappointed others?" asked Deerforth. "It is an

open secret that there were at least that many, and each supposed, up to the last, that he was to be the fortunate man."

"I never was engaged but four times," Mrs. Sinclair asserted.

"Perhaps you mean, never to more than four at a time," suggested Mrs. Liscome, whereat there was a general laugh.

"Well, none of them really counted; they all knew, or they ought to have known, that I wasn't a bit in earnest."

"Not even once?" Deerforth inquired, playfully.

Mrs. Sinclair pretended not to hear, but as she turned and said something to von Waldeck, Helen Vincent wondered why Deerforth's careless remark should have brought a blush of annoyance to her cheeks.

The luncheon proved a great success, and Deerforth's spirits rose to fever-heat. He looked as handsome and picturesque as a Vandyke portrait, and was at his wittiest and best.

"You must all write in my album," he said, as they rose from the table; "an original sentiment or a quotation, your favorite name and the flower you like best—nobody can have, any coffee until that is done."

They went back to the library, and Deerforth produced the volume, handing a pen to Mrs. Raynor.

"You deserve a sonnet, at least," she said; "but as I cannot evolve one, you shall have a sentiment from dear old Herrick. As for a man's name, yours is as pretty as any—Josselyn."

Mrs. Liscome wrote next, put her name where the date belonged and made various other blunders, whereat she laughed as heartily as the rest. Then Mrs. Vincent took the pen, and Blanche Sinclair followed her. Von Waldeck was looking over the shoulder of the latter as she finished, and said:

"You two ladies write so exactly alike that it would be impossible to distinguish one hand from the other. It is odd how little peculiarities of that sort will be shared by relatives,

who inherit them from some strong-willed ancestor."

"This is not a case of heredity," rejoined Mrs. Vincent. "My cousin and I had a governess with a will stronger than our forefathers' wills and ours combined. She elected to have us write this special hand, and we had to learn to do it."

"I can remember how she used to tap my poor little fingers with a ruler," said Blanche, holding up her dainty right hand.

Von Waldeck seized the pretty fingers and appeared to be looking anxiously for traces of ill-treatment.

"Did you cry?" he asked.

"I swore at her," said Blanche. "I had learned some dreadful oaths from an old Cuban servant. She did not understand Spanish, so I used to fling them about for consolation."

"And Blanche told mademoiselle they were little prayers for patience under persecution, which a sister of charity had taught her," added Mrs. Vincent.

"What a delightfully precocious small person she must have been!" said Mrs. Raynor.

"Delightful at all ages," pronounced the sentimental German.

"Imaginative people always are," said Deerforth.

"No wonder, then, that you are so general a favorite!" retorted Mrs. Sinclair, gaily.

"Ah, but my imagination is only a poor masculine affair! Compared with the feminine gift, it looks as dull as pink beside scarlet."

"What an ungrateful speech from a man whom women spoil as they do you!" cried Mrs. Liscome, as she pulled at a refractory bow.

"Oh, everybody knows that my criticisms of your sex are like a stingy man's philanthropic sentiments—spoken for effect," said Jock.

"And Mr. Deerforth is not spoiled," said Mrs. Vincent.

"Helen, I hope you will write my biography!" exclaimed Blanche Sinclair. "You are the only person I ever saw who could discover in her

friends virtues that nobody else dreams they possess."

"Truth and her divining-rod," laughed Deerforth.

"Truth didn't carry one," rejoined Blanche. "How you mix things up!"

"Justice used to own a rod, I believe," said Mrs. Raynor; "but nobody knows what has become of it."

"I hope I shall never find out," said Deerforth. "See how I am persecuted, Mrs. Vincent, just because you befriended me!"

"Perhaps Mrs. Sinclair has not forgotten the Spanish prayers; she might teach them to you," suggested Mrs. Raynor.

"He knows enough now of that sort to fill a missal," said von Waldeck.

"And supply the illuminations," rejoined Jock.

"Your friends could do that," said Mrs. Vincent; "and, too, in something more durable than water-colors."

"In the meantime, we have neither coffee nor Herbert," observed Jock. "He must come soon now. I move that we go into the drawing-room; I wish you to say it is pretty, Mrs. Vincent. I did not forget your favorite brand of cigarettes, Mrs. Liscome; see what a thoughtful old boy I am."

"I must try one this instant," that lady replied, taking the arm of the man who chanced to be nearest.

Blanche Sinclair had already carried off her German, and the others followed, leaving Mrs. Vincent and Deerforth a little behind. As the two reached the door, the butler informed Deerforth that he was wanted at the telephone—a very urgent message; it came from his office. Jock knew who the caller was—his agent, who had been in consultation with the directors of the Iota Mining Company. He had bidden the man telephone if his terms were agreed to, as he knew they must be; there was no other course open to Ralph Herbert and his associates.

And the matter had been settled—the victory was complete! Besides the sum to be paid, Jock would retain an interest in the Nemerick road, receiv-

ing certain shares of mining stock that any man of his acquaintance would almost have given his ears to obtain. The splendor of success blazed in Jock's eyes and rendered his smile so dazzling that Mrs. Vincent exclaimed:

"I congratulate you in advance! It is plain that you know you are called to hear some wonderful news."

"So wonderful that it seems incredible—though I knew it must come! I am glad you are here to congratulate me; that makes it worth twice as much. I am sure that knowing you brings me good luck."

"Go to your messenger; then come and tell me as much as your business reticence will allow," Mrs. Vincent said, never happier than when hearing that a friend's cherished wishes had been realized.

"Reticence is not one of my gifts, and, to tell the truth, my business ability is three-quarters luck," returned Jock. "I shall keep a lot of the boy in me, if I live to be a hundred."

"Really, I think you will; I fancy that is one of the reasons why you are so likable," Mrs. Vincent replied.

Her smile went to Jock's head like wine. In his excitement, it required a strong effort to keep back his secret. He longed to fall at her feet and cry out his adoration. But Mrs. Vincent reminded him of the necessity for prudence, by saying:

"And the man at the telephone!"

"If you will kindly make my excuses to the others," said Jock.

"Of course. I promised Count von Waldeck to play some Wagner; I shall do it while you are gone."

"Then nobody would miss me, if I stayed an hour," he replied. "But I shall miss your music; will you sing for me when I come back?"

"If I don't, I will the first time you call; won't that do as well?"

"Better—if I may call to-morrow," he said, eagerly. "Please say I may, even if it isn't one of your days for being at home."

"I am almost always at home to my friends," she answered.

"I feel so rich, now I know that I am counted among them," cried Jock.

"Then you can enjoy your fortune at your ease," she said, with her usual sincerity; "I never go back on my word."

Deerforth's conduct on the previous Saturday had given him a high place in Mrs. Vincent's esteem; he had behaved with kindness and delicacy. He had told her that he had not allowed the bonds to go out of his possession, though he had let Mrs. Sinclair believe that he obtained the money from a person who made a business of such matters. He said he had never intended that the little lady should know—she was a mere child, after all; but her passion for speculation must be checked, or she would get into serious trouble. Jock's artfully frank account of the transaction put him in a most favorable light, whereat he was exultant.

V

As Mrs. Vincent and Deerforth were crossing the antechamber, Ralph Herbert made his appearance.

"Better late than never!" cried Deerforth, eagerly scanning his visitor's face for some sign of disturbance; but Herbert looked as calm and indifferent as usual. "Confound him!" thought Jock, "he would be just as cool and supercilious if he were facing ruin." Aloud he added: "I am glad you could come in, even for a little while—and you are in time for coffee. We were good-natured enough to miss you hugely; were we not, Mrs. Vincent?"

"I believe so—now you remind me," she replied, pleasantly, as she gave Herbert her hand.

"That is a consolation," Herbert said. "I was more than sorry to be detained, Deerforth, but there was no help."

"I hope, at least, you were repaid for the detention," Jock replied, with another searching glance.

"Oh, I have a trick of being satisfied, whatever happens," said Herbert.

"The more ill-natured Fate is, the more I like to convince her that she has failed in her attempt to annoy me."

"And your telephone message, Mr. Deerforth!" said Mrs. Vincent.

Jock laughed gaily, exclaiming: "See what a careless creature I am—I had forgotten. Take Mrs. Vincent into the drawing-room, Herbert. With you two there, no one will miss me. I must attend to a little matter."

"I will offer you a bit of my philosophy, if it should prove unsatisfactory," rejoined Herbert.

Somehow, in spite of his certainty and exultation, the words struck disagreeably on Deerforth's ear; but he said, lightly, as he hurried off: "I sha'n't have to borrow from your stock this time—thanks, all the same."

It was characteristic of all three that no word had passed between Helen and Herbert, or Mrs. Raynor, concerning their unexpected appearance in Deerforth's apartment on the previous Saturday. Helen had been angry at the moment, but on reflection was glad. If Herbert had been annoyed or troubled, so much the better; she had tried for weeks to rouse him out of his cool imperturbability into a revelation of regret or disapproval of her friendliness with Deerforth. But her opinion of the latter had changed so much and so suddenly that she felt impelled to say something in his favor.

"You have not a good opinion of our host," she said, quickly.

"I am sure I never told you so," he answered.

"As if I needed to be told things!" she exclaimed. "Of course, half the stories about him are exaggerated."

"Did he tell you so?" Herbert asked, tranquilly, as she paused.

"You are trying to vex me, but you shall not," returned she. "He would no more deign to defend himself than you—or I. No doubt, he is wicked enough—he is a man, so what could one expect?"

"I am always prepared for anything from the son of a woman," Herbert said, teasingly. "But what have you

discovered in the very agreeable Deerforth that you did not expect?"

"That he is as impulsive as a boy and exceedingly kind-hearted," cried Helen, hotly. "I wish you would not always be cynical and unpleasant when I try to be friendly."

"It is your friendship for Deerforth that is in question just now," said Herbert, smiling.

"Indeed, he did something that makes me feel that he is a friend," she replied, earnestly. "I am not going to tell you what it was; but I wish you to believe that I have good grounds for my assertion that not only is he a kind man, but one to be trusted—of that I am convinced."

"I always bow to your convictions," said Herbert.

Though it was difficult for Mrs. Vincent to subdue her irritation, she went on, eagerly: "He has proved it! I came here on Saturday to ask a business favor of him and I found that he had attended to the matter in a way that only a thorough gentleman would—it was actually chivalrous."

"Master Jock is so picturesquely handsome that your epithet seems in keeping," Herbert said, placidly. "Alice and I saw you and the nix coming in and were inspired to join you."

"Blanche isn't a nix—you have never done her justice, either. And you hoped to vex me by coming, but you did not in the least."

"Well, then, we are good friends—till I displease you?"

"Yes; so come in and be good, and don't look at Blanche as if she were a marmoset trying to steal chestnuts!"

"I have none that she would care to purloin, and you are certain to give her a full share of yours."

"I am going to play Wagner for Count von Waldeck," she said, taking his arm; and they entered the drawing-room on the most amicable terms.

Jock Deerforth stood listening to the telephone message from his confidential agent. He could not have heard aright—he could not!

"I do not understand you," he called, impatiently.

Again the words came to his ear, clear and distinct. The Iota Mining Company declined to purchase the Nemerick railway, except on terms even lower than those mentioned when transactions were first opened, weeks before.

"But they know that it has changed hands, that the stock is quoted in Helena at a tremendous advance?"

The directors had smiled at this information; they congratulated the new owners on this sudden and remarkable boom, but their ideas remained unaltered, save in one particular—possession of the road was of less moment to them than they had supposed a month previous.

More hurried questions from Jock; to each in turn a more overwhelming answer. He grew dizzy and blind; he managed to call:

"Wait a moment!"

His hands dropped to his sides; he was forced to sit down till his reeling brain cleared and his trembling legs recovered their strength; for a little he could neither think nor stand. He fought for breath, as if the air in the room had suddenly become exhausted. A torturing pain shot through his heart—he had felt it once before and been warned by his physician of possibly serious consequences. By a powerful effort of will, he forced his suffering body into submission and summoned his interlocutor.

"What was the offer?"

"A quarter—only a quarter!"

A quarter of a million!—and he had spent a million and more, besides the obligations he had taken on himself. He was ruined—hopelessly ruined! Not even business credit would be left.

He thought afterward that he must have had a brief period of unconsciousness. He found himself by the door—he must get to his bedroom. To do so he must cross the ante-chamber and pass the drawing-room. He thought that, if any one saw him,

he could manage to make some excuse and go on. Still, it was no matter—nothing mattered now.

The portières were partly drawn; through the opening he could see his guests scattered about the room; their backs were toward the entrance. The last notes of the "Swan Song" died on the stillness; there came a gay laugh from Blanche Sinclair; then Herbert's voice, as he stood with another man quite near the doors.

"We find that a road can be built much more cheaply than we supposed; we have secured a new grant that gives us control of the land necessary. We really do not care to deal with the Nemerick Company; still, we have made an offer. Something underhand in this purchase of the road by new people? It looks that way; at least, as if the idea had been to force us to accept exorbitant terms. But, if the present owners purchased with that intention, they are terribly bitten. The sale was supposed to be unknown to us, but we did know and took measures accordingly."

Then Jock succeeded in dragging his leaden feet on—his dressing-room and bedroom were in a jutting corner of the great house, accessible either by a side hall or the library.

He went slowly down the passage, supporting himself against the wall, entered his dressing-room and dropped heavily into a chair. He had an insane sensation of having made a long journey; the closing of the ante-chamber door seemed to shut him out forever from his old world.

In his jealously guarded cabinet there was a remedy his physician had given him for an attack like the present. As soon as a temporary cessation of the pain permitted him to rise, he took the medicine out, swallowed the prescribed dose and passed into his bedroom, carrying the bottle in his hand. He was forced to lie down while waiting for the drops to have their effect. Body and mind were alike so benumbed now that he could not think. He was vaguely

conscious that his guests might begin to wonder over his absence; but he did not care; or they might be gone—it seemed so long since he last heard their voices.

The sound the door made in closing echoed through his brain—the door that had shut between him and life! At the moment when his triumph seemed complete, he had been flung into this hell of defeat and fear. His broken thoughts drifted aimlessly on through blackness, until he sank into a stupor that was as much faintness as sleep. Suddenly, a new image started up in his mind. He saw Helen Vincent's face, smiling across the night; he heard her voice, clear and distinct.

He slept at last.

VI

In the drawing-room Mrs. Vincent played selections from Wagner with a skill and appreciation that sent the young German into ecstasies, which Blanche Sinclair was music-lover enough to share. At length two of the men were obliged to make their farewells, and Helen took advantage of the opportunity to rise from the piano.

"That is as much of the music of the future as is good for the present," she said, in answer to entreaties for more. "Musicians should leave off while people still wish to listen, just as women should abjure dancing while partners are still plentiful."

"Sensible, but sententious," said Herbert.

A merry skirmish of words began, in which Mrs. Raynor and Mrs. Liscome joined, the latter amusing, as usual, sometimes from the cleverness of her remarks, but as often from their glaring inappropriateness.

Meanwhile, the youthful Teuton was bemoaning in Mrs. Sinclair's ear the cruel necessity that obliged him to catch the next Washington express. She condoled with him and teased him in turn, till he was fairly bewildered and his admirable English grew hope-

lessly German. He tore himself away at last with hasty adieus to the others and excuses to be offered to the absent host.

Blanche went as far as the ante-chamber with him, more amused than touched by his genuine distress at having to say farewell. Mrs. Liscome met her at the door as she returned, whispering:

"I don't know what to do—I am coming all to bits! I wonder if there is a chambermaid and where I can go?"

"You dreadful creature, to blacken Jock's immaculate reputation by the bare suggestion!" said Blanche. "But we can go to his dressing-room—I know the way."

"If only I can hold together till we get there!" said Mrs. Liscome, joining in her friend's mirth.

Blanche led the way to the dressing-room. Mrs. Liscome retired behind a friendly screen to repair damages, and her friend aided her, while they both laughed like a pair of school-girls.

"Now you can finish setting yourself to rights," Blanche said, at last. "I will keep watch, for one of the servants might stray in before you are presentable."

"My clothes behave as if they disliked to stay on me," sighed Mrs. Liscome. "I undergo tortures, positive tortures, between accidents and the constant fear of them."

"You remind me of my pet doll," said Blanche. "She was beautiful, and I adored her and neglected all the others. But some accident happened to the poor thing's left leg—it never would stay on well afterward—and always when I was exhibiting her to some envious girl that wretched leg would come off. Finally, I made Helen believe that she broke it, and she saved up her spending money for a month, in order to buy a wonderful blue-china monkey to console me."

"How very shabby of you!"

"Oh, I told her the truth at last!"

"After she had ruined herself buying the monkey. Blanche, you haven't a shadow of conscience!"

"Oh, yes—but it is so precious I keep it locked up; one doesn't wear one's valuable jewels every day."

"Stop making me laugh, or I shall never be dressed," said Mrs. Liscome.

So Blanche wandered about the room, examining the bric-à-brac and thinking what a pity it was that it should be wasted on a creature of the male gender.

She approached the cabinet and looked curiously at it. Jock had shown it to her and Sydney one day, and, when they admired it, said that its beauty was its least recommendation—it possessed a secret spring that must be touched when turning the key. He had opened it and shown them its store of little drawers and the special place for papers of small dimensions, each compartment designated by a letter of the alphabet.

Blanche sighed heavily, as if she were envious of the quaint affair. She was turning away, when she perceived that the door of the cabinet was slightly open. In his haste Jock had not swung it to heavily enough, and the spring had failed to catch.

Blanche drew a deep breath, glanced quickly about, hesitated; then her pretty mouth settled into a curve of such determination that it made her face look hard as iron.

"I will have them," she thought. "I will do it—then Helen need never know that he had them. Adela, are you nearly ready?" she called, and her voice was steady. At a crisis, desperation with her supplied the place of courage, coward as she was ordinarily.

"I shall be, in three minutes," came the answer. "This has been a serious business, I assure you."

Blanche swung the door of the cabinet softly back and glanced along the compartments till she reached the one marked V. It contained a little package of letters—she knew they were there; Jock's mocking smile had told her that, when she and her husband were shown the cabinet. Helen need never know of the existence of the

letters—she would destroy them as soon as she reached home.

She pulled the package out. She must shut the door so that the spring would catch; then, as Jock never took the key off his watch-chain, the mystery of the letters' disappearance could never be solved. She had the package in her left hand; with her right she was cautiously closing the cabinet, when her left wrist was seized in a grip of steel. As she turned, Jock Deerforth's eyes looked down into hers. He was smiling, his smile made more terrible by the pallor and deep lines which the mental and physical agony of the last hour had stamped on his face.

For an instant Blanche could neither stir nor speak. She stood gazing into Jock's eyes, in helpless terror. Again desperation nerved her; she made no effort to free herself, but said, in a low, hard voice:

"Let go my wrist!"

"What do you say, Blanche?" Mrs. Liscome called, from behind the screen. "I am ready—just a second."

Blanche was struggling now with all her feeble might. Jock's grip on her wrist tightened; neither spoke. She was panting for breath, and the room swam before her eyes, but she would not let herself either cry out or faint, though she was sick with terror, and his fingers seemed cutting into her wrist. He was smiling still, and his mute mockery drove her tortured nerves so utterly beyond control that she struck him across the mouth, unconscious of what she was doing.

"That decides matters," said Jock, and he laughed aloud.

Mrs. Liscome looked from behind the screen in wonder that changed to fright, as she saw the two standing there. At the same instant she saw Helen Vincent come in from the passage, and as she had no more presence of mind or courage than a rabbit, she obeyed the blind instinct which impelled her to flight. She opened the library door, ran into the farthest corner of the room and fainted comfortably away on a convenient sofa.

Again Blanche found voice enough to gasp: "Let me go! I will never give them up! Let me go! Helen shall have——"

As her voice died in a moan of pain under the merciless pressure of those cruel fingers, Helen Vincent moved forward, saying:

"Blanche! Mr. Deerforth!"

Blanche's hold on the package involuntarily relaxed. Deerforth took it from her and forced himself to look at Mrs. Vincent.

"Helen, make him give up the letters—he shall give them to you! I knew where he kept them—marked V, Helen, marked V!"

She was past every vestige of self-control now and sobbed in pitiful hysterics.

"Go away, Blanche!" Mrs. Vincent said, quietly; "Mr. Deerforth will give me the letters."

"I could hardly be expected to give booty to a person whom I found rifling my cabinet," Deerforth said, with the sad severity of a man grieved by the discovery of criminal treachery on the part of one in whom he had placed confidence.

Even in his state of mental confusion from the effects of his recent calamity, Jock's quick wits could still act, and he perceived that he could turn this present exigency to his own advantage.

Blanche could only moan, and repeat: "The letters, Helen—the letters!"

Her cousin pushed her gently aside and bade her go, saying again:

"Mr. Deerforth will give me the letters. I am sorry neither you nor he has been as frank as you promised to be."

Blanche ran away into the passage, trying to check her sobs. Mrs. Vincent held out her hand for the package.

"I know you will give me the letters, Mr. Deerforth," she said.

"I would give you anything under heaven!" he exclaimed. "I would have given them to you weeks ago, if you had asked. Don't judge me harshly; I shall leave Mrs. Sinclair

to tell you herself of her conduct. She had the package in her hand when I came out of my bedroom. I was already nearly crazy from some news that telephone message brought. You can fancy having this other business added! But she will tell you that I did not even speak but once—I just held her hand. I did not take the package till you came in."

"You look very ill, Mr. Deerforth," she said, full of wondering pity, for the man's drawn, seamed face was dismal to look on. "You have had some terrible shock. If it is a business trouble—if I could do anything—I told you I counted you among my friends. When I can assist a friend, I am only too glad; I can feel then that I am of some use in the world."

If Jock Deerforth had been his ordinary self, he would not have mistaken the meaning of her words; but he was wild with misery, half-maddened by the consciousness of defeat. It made, indeed, the bitterest drop in his cup, and its extreme of bitterness lay in the thought that the man he hated had been able to overthrow his plans. True, Herbert had been unaware of his dealings with the Nemerick Company—Or had he by some means discovered the fact and chosen this opportunity to avenge himself? The thought flashed across Jock's brain and added to the disorder of his faculties. Jock had been sure that Herbert was pained and enraged by his intimacy with Mrs. Vincent. A second after this new idea started up, he was equally certain that Herbert had discovered he was the purchaser of the railway and had deliberately ruined his plans.

While this reflection rushed like a flame through his mind, he was looking at Mrs. Vincent, with his stormy eyes so full of agony that her sensitive nature was roused to an extreme of sympathy that impelled her to repeat her offer, still more urgently, without the slightest thought of the meaning that vanity or passion might cause the man to attach to her words. She had not a shadow of suspicion of Deerforth's feel-

ings toward her, and in her impulsiveness she spoke as freely and earnestly as she would have done to Ralph Herbert under similar circumstances.

"Don't hesitate to tell me," she exclaimed; "a friend's troubles are my troubles. I shall not believe you trust me, unless you let me do anything possible; and there is something I can do—I am sure there is."

She cared for him—she cared! The hope he had hardly ventured to contemplate was no delusion—she knew that he loved her! This insistence on sharing his terrible burden proved that she meant him to understand her knowledge of his secret; held a permission to put it into speech.

"You are the grandest woman in the world, and the best!" he cried. "I was down in hell and you come to help me out."

"Ready to do anything in my power," she said, gently, even now not roused to any conception of the real meaning of his exaggerated words. His business disaster must be extreme indeed; she was glad to be able to assist a human being in a strait so sore as his. "Only tell me what I can do! I am a perfectly free, independent woman; there is no one in whom it is necessary for me to confide in regard to anything whatever."

Even this endeavor to assure him that any assistance she could render would remain a secret between them had an entirely different significance to Jock's excited brain. For the moment he was not thinking of her money—she was the one woman he had ever really loved—every word she uttered was a proof that she understood and shared his feelings. She was so moved by his suffering that conventionalities had no weight with her. She wished him to comprehend that she considered it her right to share his anxieties; she was encouraging him to speak.

"I think I was ready to end everything, to get out of the world; not because I was a coward, but life looked so hopeless."

"Not while a friend was left!"

"It was the thought of you that helped me; I could not help hoping. Helen, Helen, I love you, I love you! But you know that—you——"

She stepped back, looking at him with eyes whose condemnation froze his very soul; then, without a word, she turned to leave the room.

"You can't go—you sha'n't!" he groaned. "Don't look so—don't! I am sorry I said it. I did not mean to, but I had to speak this once. Forgive me—I will not say another word—only forgive me!"

Mrs. Vincent moved back and confronted him. The man was mad—he must be—but even in her wonder and wrath she could not forget that her aid alone probably stood between him and ruin.

"Once more I offer you my help," she said; "freely, fully."

He was past reasoning, past thinking of his own interest or safety, past the possibility of comprehending his blunder.

"Don't be angry!" he pleaded. "I ought not to have spoken till I was free; till I am, I shall not again disturb you by even a look; but just this once—this once, Helen."

"And I believed you a gentleman," she said, with a cold disdain that stung him worse than a blow.

"You made me think you cared!" he cried, in despairing rage; "you tried to make me believe it."

"Because I offered to lend you money?" she asked, with still more insufferable scorn in her eyes and voice. "I should have made the same offer to a groom in my stables, if he were in serious difficulties—provided I believed him an honest man, as I believed you to be."

Deerforth fairly bent and shrank together under the lash of her words, as a man would under the cut of a whip. A very devil of fury awoke in him, as his frenzied mind comprehended that he had lost everything now. An involuntary movement of his arm knocked off the package of letters, which he had laid on the edge of the cabinet. He stooped hurriedly

and picked it up, holding it threateningly toward her. A new devil, the meanest and cruelest that the animal instincts in man ever evolved, the desire for revenge, seized Deerforth. An infernal inspiration came, too—he held his vengeance in his hand.

"You had forgotten these," he said. "You might have had them easily, if you had kept up your acting a little longer."

She was not cowed, but the necessity for recovering the letters made it impossible to go without an attempt to influence him. The contempt for the man, which his self-betrayal had created in her mind, led her to think that he would be capable of selling them, if by their price he could face his pecuniary difficulties.

"What do you consider their value?" she inquired, in a matter-of-fact tone, as if opening an ordinary business transaction. She expected an outburst of wrath as a preliminary, but she believed that his needs and his common sense would induce him to give them up. "Set a price on them, please!"

"Say that you forgive me—that I may see you again!" he cried. "Give me a chance to prove that I am not what you think. Oh, remember I am half-mad; don't judge me by to-day!"

He could not resist this last wild attempt to appease her. Women had so spoiled him that he had grown to think his power over them almost irresistible—and this woman he loved.

"How much money will buy the letters, Mr. Deerforth?" she asked, as composedly as if she had not heard his words.

He crushed the packet in his hand, hissing out: "All your millions could not buy them! I shall give you time to consider—only send me a word, one little word."

"Since I am not rich enough to purchase, they must remain in your hands!" she answered, turning away.

"You'd better not go in this fashion!" he exclaimed.

No soldier was ever braver, phys-

ically and morally, than Helen Vincent. She did not falter.

"I shall bid you good day, Mr. Deerforth," she said.

"Are those your last words?" he demanded.

"My last," she replied.

"Then, by God, I'll use them!" he said. He tore open the packet—selected a letter and held it unfolded before her eyes. "I'll show this one first to Herbert—he knows your writing pretty well."

Helen Vincent stared in white horror at the page. She tried to speak, but no words escaped her trembling lips.

"You understand—I thought you would," sneered Deerforth. "Read it at your leisure, I am in no hurry. We might ask Herbert's opinion."

"Certainly," said Ralph Herbert's voice.

Both turned and saw Herbert standing in the doorway of the library, calm as usual.

"Listening!" pronounced Jock.

"I came in, Mrs. Vincent," he said, "to tell you that Mrs. Raynor wishes to go. I was just in time to hear Mr. Deerforth's last words."

"You saved me the trouble of sending for you," exclaimed Jock.

"Go home, Helen," Herbert said; "I will bring your letters to you."

He took her arm and drew her into the library—she had no strength to resist if she had desired. She heard the door close and lock behind her; then she heard Deerforth's sinister laugh and hurried away.

Blanche Sinclair came out of the reception-room and ran toward her. "Have you the letters?" she whispered, her face still white from fright and hysterical emotion.

Helen shook her head.

"You let him keep them? You must be crazy!" moaned Blanche. "Do you wish us all to be the talk of the town? There is nothing Jock will stop at now. If you had humored him a little, he would have let you have them—the man is wild over you."

"Do you, too, mean to insult me?"

"No—no! But how could you come away without the letters?"

"Ralph Herbert will bring me the letters."

"Good heavens!" cried Blanche. "What did you tell him?"

"Nothing! What was there to say? Deerforth was threatening me; he said Herbert would recognize my writing."

"Oh, Helen—he wouldn't show them to Ralph!"

"As if Ralph would look at them!"

"You didn't leave those men together!" Blanche exclaimed.

"I could not well help doing so," returned Helen. "Ralph Herbert put me out of the room and locked the door."

"Oh, they will murder each other!" moaned Blanche. "What can we do?"

"Go home, woman-like, now that we have done all the mischief possible," retorted Mrs. Vincent.

She wished a little time before meeting Mrs. Raynor's searching eyes. She passed Blanche and entered the reception-room. Mrs. Liscome sat huddled up on a sofa, drinking ammonia and water.

"I fainted dead away—I was so frightened!" she began; but Mrs. Vincent unceremoniously cut short her explanation.

"Since you have come to, we will go home," she said.

"I had just got my things straight and was ready to go, when, the first thing I knew, there were Blanche and Jock quarreling—and where he came from, goodness knows!—and Blanche won't tell what the matter was," persisted Mrs. Liscome, "and I hate mysteries."

"Then don't invent one," said Blanche, courageous enough now that she had the support of Helen's presence. "I wanted Jock to show me some old letters of—somebody's—and he wouldn't. I tried to snatch them just for fun, and he got angry."

"Ananias and Sapphira combined could not match her," was Mrs. Vincent's thought, as she listened to the glibly uttered falsehood.

"Well, you seemed frightened enough!" cried Mrs. Liscome.

"I am always frightened if anybody is angry," rejoined the little lady; "Helen knows that—she gets angry with me herself, sometimes."

Mrs. Vincent was listening for some sound from behind the locked door. All she heard was the notes of the piano in the drawing-room. Mrs. Raynor was playing a fantasia of Chopin's while she waited for the rest to appear. She thought it very probable that Blanche had insisted on their sitting down to cards in spite of her message, and so decided to remain where she was. When the three women entered she perceived that there was something amiss, but asked no questions.

"Alice, the carriage is here," Mrs. Vincent said. "I have your wraps; let me help you."

Mrs. Raynor expected to find the two men in the anteroom, but it was empty.

"I must say good-bye to our host," she remarked.

"He and Mr. Herbert are busy," Helen said, and her tone checked further inquiries on the part of her tactful sister-in-law.

It seemed to Mrs. Vincent a cowardly act to go away, but there was nothing else to do. She would not be allowed to enter the dressing-room; she would only make herself ridiculous if she tried. She must accept the ordinary feminine rôle—retreat and leave the man who had come to her aid to bear the brunt of matters. To go was the hardest thing she had ever done in her life; but go she must.

She sat looking out of the carriage window as they drove home; she could hear Mrs. Liscome making a ludicrous jumble of her misfortune and her fright; she could hear Blanche's nervous laughter and Mrs. Raynor's efforts to change the conversation. She heard it all through the rush of one absorbing thought: in a little while she must meet Ralph Herbert's eyes and take that packet of letters from his hand; for he would bring it—she knew that.

VII

THE two men faced each other. Neither was good to look on at this moment; handsome as both faces were, they looked equally dangerous.

"What are you going to do about it?" Deerforth asked, with his insufferable sneer. "You are a very prudent man, but you forget yourself for once. You made a rash promise, Mr. Herbert; how do you expect to keep it?"

For the instant Jock had positively forgotten everything save that he had lost the esteem of the woman he adored and that the man who stood there loved her—perhaps was loved in return—and that he had it in his power to torture both. He put the refolded letter with the others and laid them in the drawer, very deliberately.

"You are giving yourself unnecessary trouble," said Herbert; "you will only have to take them out again."

"Oh, you mean that you would like to read them? With all the pleasure in life, Mr. Herbert."

"I mean that you must seal that packet and give it to me."

"Are you an utter damned fool—or do you suppose I am?" cried Deerforth.

"You are not, certainly," said Herbert, "though you make mistakes sometimes, in spite of your astuteness. You have made several, lately."

So, he knew into whose hands the Nemerick Company's railway had passed! And with the thought came the recollection of his own disaster to drive Jock madder than ever.

"Damn you! So you ruined me on purpose!" he exclaimed. "I'll kill you if I swing for it!"

He struck out with all the strength of his powerful right arm, but Herbert warded off the blow and dealt one in return that stretched the other on the floor. Jock was up again in a flash, and the two clenched; and in both the instincts of the fighting animal overpowered every mental faculty. They were trained athletes and well matched, though Jock's recent heart-attack put him at a disadvantage. The restraints

of conventional breeding were gone—gone, too, the hereditary influences of civilization—primeval nature asserted itself. It was *anthropos* and his brother in deadly strife. They made little noise on the thick carpet; but, if they had, the servants in the basement would have felt no surprise. They were accustomed to hearing impromptu fencing, wrestling and sparring matches overhead when their master entertained his men friends; for that matter, they were accustomed to ladies witnessing such exhibitions.

The two men fell, locked in each other's arms, but were on their feet at the same instant. Again Jock struck out—the blow aimed below his antagonist's chest—but Herbert was prepared and avoided it; his terrible arm felled Deerforth. This time pain wrung from the latter a sound that was like the strangled howl of a wounded wolf. He writhed in agony, and the sight of his suffering restored Herbert's self-control. He saw a carafe of water on a table, filled a glass and brought it. At the same instant Deerforth staggered to his feet and dropped into a chair. When he could speak, he said:

"That will have to do—I'm not up to anything more to-day."

Herbert sat down and waited in silence. Presently Deerforth rose, got a bottle of brandy from a closet, swallowed a sparing dose and sat down again.

"Now," said Herbert, "we will try to grow human once more. I don't think you are in your usual condition—it was lucky for you, for if you had been, one or the other might have had to stand trial for manslaughter."

His composure and quiet tone nerved Jock to emulate this return to the ordinary conduct of civilized men. He reached for a package of cigarettes, took one and tossed the bundle across the table, saying:

"I'd have stood my chance with satisfaction! Now let's smoke."

Herbert took a cigar-case from his pocket and lighted a Havana.

Jock watched him; then asked, sud-

denly: "Is that because you don't like cigarettes, or because you believe in imitating the Arabs?"

"Both," said Herbert. "Now about the letters."

"You always hated me," continued Jock, "and God knows I hate you. Well, you've paid me out; but it's my show now."

"I remarked to you once that the wheel still turned," rejoined Herbert. "I was reminded to-day of our conversation, when your agent made us acquainted with the ultimatum of the Nemerick Company."

"I was sure you knew you were ruining me," said Jock, "and that is why you refused the offer."

"We declined because it was not to our interest to accept," Herbert replied; "I would have told you we should not, if you had asked me before you bought the road."

Deerforth struggled hard to retain his appearance of composure, but the consequences of his failure rose with such harrowing distinctness that rage and despair again overpowered him.

"I wish I could have killed you!" he snarled. "But I can hurt you worse than a money loss could!"

He pointed toward the packet that lay in the half-open drawer. His brain was acting clearly and swiftly now; rapidly he faced the present conditions. All hope was gone; Mrs. Vincent loathed him. He must do the best thing possible for himself, commit the crowning meanness of his life, remembering how, only a few hours ago, he had dreamed of a future that held honor and happiness.

Herbert merely smiled at the last words and knocked the ashes off his cigar.

"You won't smile when you hear the rest," said Jock, in a queer, low voice, while his eyes blazed threateningly. "I have something besides that package; I have two letters that Charley Voorhies never sent and forgot to destroy."

"Don't you say a word more, Deerforth!"

"All hell couldn't stop me now!

You don't half know. There was a secret marriage—and Charley wasn't dead when she married Vincent!"

For a second time it seemed that the physical struggle would be renewed; then Herbert grasped the arms of his chair to hold himself still—the look on his face the most terrible that Deerforth had ever met.

"I knew that, pushed hard enough, you would stop at few crimes," Herbert said; "but I did think there was a limit to your baseness."

"You didn't scruple to ruin me! I think those documents are worth my price for the railway."

Jock was trembling from head to foot. It seemed to him that he was two men at once, and one revolted at the meanness of the other. But on one side lay safety—the preservation of business credit. To reach it he must cross that gulf of treachery. If only he had put it out of his own power to take the step! Unconsciously he muttered:

"I wish I had given her the infernal things!"

And Herbert heard him, but made no sign. Jock turned fiercely on him.

"Which shall it be?" he exclaimed; "war, or the letters and my terms?"

"Neither," said Herbert, rising. "I shall have you expelled from the brokers' board, Mr. Deerforth. The evidence of my man Soper will be enough."

The whiteness of Jock Deerforth's face was the whiteness of death, but his eyes burned with the agony of undying life.

"Sit down!" he groaned.

"There isn't anything to say," returned Herbert. "You can give me that confession of Soper's, along with the packet—and those two letters you mentioned."

For a few moments Deerforth did not stir, but Herbert saw that it was not because he hesitated; simply because he had not sufficiently recovered from that overwhelming shock to be able to stand.

"Soper!" he said, in a half-whisper.

"He meant to be faithful to his bar-

gain," Herbert said, divining the wretched man's thought. "It happened that I went home unexpectedly and found him busy with my notes and our manager's letters."

"Then you knew all along? You meant to spring this on me to-day?"

"If you had done by Soper as you promised, if there had been no threats," Herbert said, pointing to the packet, "and if certain other things I knew about had been arranged, probably I should never have told you of my discovery; certainly I should have told no one else."

Deerforth shivered under the conviction of the absolute truthfulness of the words, and in sheer pity Herbert turned his eyes away from the misery of that pallid face.

After a little, Deerforth dragged himself out of his chair and went to the cabinet. He opened one drawer, then a second, taking papers from each.

"That's for Soper," he said, slowly, laying an envelope on the table. "See for yourself."

When Herbert had looked at the paper, Deerforth held up two letters.

"Put those with the packet and seal the envelope with your seal, please," said Herbert.

Jock complied in silence, then sat down again, wearily. The pain about his heart had returned and he was weak and ill. Through his half-closed eyelids he saw Herbert seated at a table, writing; he wondered dully what he was after now; did he mean to extort a written confession of some sort? Jock told himself that he would sooner blow his own brains out than give that—there was not much to live for now. He was conscious of an odd, impersonal pity for Jock Deerforth, as if Jock had been somebody else—an exceedingly good fellow in a thousand ways, capable of impulsive kindnesses far beyond the prigs who prided themselves on possessing moral scruples. It was easy enough for a man to be straightforward when life had given him everything, as it had Herbert. Just let him change places with

Jock and see how quickly his fine theories would die out under the strain.

"Deerforth," said Herbert; "one thing more."

"You've got all you will," returned Jock, sitting upright in his chair, his face grim with obstinate resolve.

"I am going to double our company's offer," Herbert continued. "Tell your agent to accept the sum that was set; it will be paid to-morrow. I have made out my personal cheque for the remainder; you can give me a receipt on account."

Jock stared at the slip of paper that Herbert laid on the table before him, read the amount—two hundred and fifty thousand dollars! If he accepted it, the next day would see half a million in his hands. With that sum at his immediate disposal, he might tide over the worst of his difficulties, reach at least temporary security.

"You are paying this out of your own pocket!" he said, hoarsely.

"I dare say I shall get it back, in time," rejoined Herbert.

Jock tore the cheque in fragments and flung them on the floor. "I'd be damned twice over before I would take it," he said.

He sat staring at the pieces, sick with regret, marveling at his own act; yet he would not have recalled it. A better or a worse man might have accepted; that Jock Deerforth could not, was one of the countless puzzles for which psychology has no solution.

"In a way, it would be just," Herbert said. "I might have told you weeks ago what I knew."

Jock sank back in his chair and shut his eyes; if he had run a score of miles without stopping, he could not have been more exhausted.

"Do, for God's sake, get out!" he said, fretfully.

"In a moment," Herbert replied.

Jock did not notice what he said; another spasm of pain had seized him, and while it lasted he could neither think nor stir. Herbert glanced at him, then crossed the room to the writing-table. He took out his cheque-

book and rapidly filled up another cheque, placing it under an ink-stand where it could not fail to catch Deerforth's eyes when he rose.

As he turned to the door, he looked again at the white face and limp figure in the arm-chair—a sight so pitiable that, whatever a sterner moralist might have felt, Herbert was touched to the heart. He wished, with remorseful longing, that he had gone weeks before to Deerforth and told him of his discovery. He had learned within the last hour what few, even among upright men ever learn, that Mercy should walk always a step in advance of Justice.

Jock's head moved to and fro against the cushion, in an involuntary effort to ease the whirl and rush in his brain; his eyes opened again, glassy and staring.

"Damn you!" he said. "It was an infernally fine thing you offered to do, after all."

"I wish I had done it before," was the answer.

"And I wish I'd killed you, or you me!" gasped Jock. "Get out—do!"

Herbert went away, closing the door softly behind him. The mirror in the anteroom showed him that his coat was torn and his collar sorely crumpled, but his greatcoat would hide all that, and he would return home before going to Mrs. Vincent's.

When he could find strength to move, Deerforth had recourse to his medicine once more. As he went back to his chair, he saw the cheque; he held it in his hand when he sat down again. He tried to think, but his mind seemed a hollow space through which a whirlwind was rushing. After a little he managed to direct an envelope to Herbert, put the cheque in and sealed it.

Did he mean to keep the thing, or did he mean to send it back? He had no more idea than if he had been some one else asking the question. Was he intending to face life, or to end the miserable farce by aid of the revolver that lay in the table drawer convenient to his hand? He could not

answer that, either. Jock Deerforth seemed a separate identity which would act independent of any will of his and on whose decision he could not count.

Well, it did not matter; nothing mattered here or elsewhere—if there were any elsewhere. All he desired was to sit there and never be obliged to stir, or to think. He wished that he had given the letters to Helen Vincent—no, he did not. It was all over; the world had come to an end, whether he stayed in it or not.

The shadows deepened; the great house was very still; the limp figure settled heavily back against the cushions. Jock sank into the profound sleep of exhaustion, the envelope still grasped in the right hand that rested on the arm of the chair.

VIII

WHEN the carriage reached Mrs. Vincent's house, Mrs. Liscome said: "I suppose you don't want me, but I want some tea, dreadfully."

"Come in, by all means," Mrs. Vincent replied.

"I was coming, anyway," Blanche Sinclair said, with a somewhat poor attempt at her usual manner.

Effort as it was to talk and appear composed, Helen had no desire to gain leisure to think, until Herbert had come and gone. She had never loved him more than at this moment, yet a fierce resentment was rapidly gathering against him in her mind. He had already judged her—she was sure of that. Even if it were possible, she would offer no explanation. More, if eyes or voice betrayed censure or scorn, she would never forgive him, never exchange a word with him again.

While Mrs. Raynor was busy with her samovar and Mrs. Liscome chattered with her customary volubility and unintelligibleness, beginning sentences and leaving them unfinished in a fashion as exasperating as it was ludicrous, Helen crossed the room to arrange a vase of flowers that did not please her fastidious taste. She

had noticed the thing as we all notice trifles in moments of strong excitement and was doing her work half-mechanically, when Blanche spoke in a low tone, close at her side.

"Are you frightened, Helen?" she asked.

"No."

The voice was not encouraging, but Blanche persisted: "You don't think anything will happen?"

"To you, do you mean? What should?"

"I meant them; Jock goes crazy when he is angry, and Ralph——"

"—is quite able to take care of himself. Men don't fight duels nowadays and only draymen indulge in fisticuffs," returned Mrs. Vincent, contemptuously. "Upon my word, I think they have the advantage of gentlemen."

"You aren't angry with me, Helen?"

"Oh, what would be the use!" said Mrs. Vincent, and now her voice was weary and hopeless. "I should only have to get over it; I shall go on forgiving you and loving you to the end of my life. I feel now as if I could never believe you again, but I dare say I shall; and if I pretend to, that is all you will care about."

"I do care—I do! I am wretched—wretched! I wish I had let the letters alone—but I did not stop to think. It seemed to me that, if I could only get hold of them, it would settle everything."

"Well, it has," Helen replied, with a bitter little laugh.

"You will tell Ralph?" demanded Blanche, her face paling again with fright. "If Sydney—oh, Helen, if Sydney——"

"I wouldn't open my lips to Ralph Herbert to save my life," cried Mrs. Vincent. "He told me he would bring my letters; let him do it. My letters!—if you had heard the tone!"

"I am so sick and faint!" moaned Blanche. "I can't talk. I was afraid to come in, but I could not bear to go home."

"For heaven's sake, don't make a scene before those two! Go up-stairs

and lie down; I will send you some tea. There, there—be a good child and don't give way, now that everything is over."

"But if Jock shouldn't give up the letters?"

"He has Ralph Herbert to deal with," Helen exclaimed. "Do go and rest. I will come up after he has gone. I am quite capable of settling matters. There is only Ralph now—we have done with the other."

"I thought the world had come to an end," said Blanche, with a sigh of relief; "but you always know what to do."

"Don't you both want some tea?" Mrs. Raynor called.

"Blanche is going to lie down," said Mrs. Vincent; "we will send her up a cup."

"I have a horrible headache," added Mrs. Sinclair, ready as usual to embroider facts with fiction.

She left the room, and Helen joined the two women.

"Blanche is so sensitive," said Mrs. Liscome, in her comfortable voice. "Just like me—the least thing completely upsets us both. Now, you don't mind, no matter what happens, Helen. I believe your nerves are made of steel."

"They were left out of my anatomy," Helen replied.

Mrs. Raynor glanced at the dumpy visitor with a somewhat sarcastic smile, then at her sister-in-law with an anxiety which, with her customary discretion, she refrained from putting into words.

"I shall not get over my fright in a week," continued Mrs. Liscome, in the calmest of tones. "Do give me some more tea, Alice. What a lovely gown that is, Helen!—you look magnificent in it."

She rambled on about her boy, her servants, a new book, her neuralgia, Mrs. Evert's shocking behavior with young Bascome, Mr. Liscome's fretfulness if dinner happened to be late, and any other matter that chanced to drift across her sieve-like brain. She left one-half of her sentences unfinished

and jumbled the others so inextricably that it would have been difficult to decide whether it was her small son who had become the victim of the married flirt, or young Bascome who had neuralgia. But neither of her companions took the trouble to listen to her monologue, so the uncertainty as to her meaning was of no consequence. Sometimes Helen said 'yes,' at random, or Mrs. Raynor said 'no,' but they remembered to glance at her occasionally; so she drank tea and wandered on, enjoying herself immensely.

It seemed to Helen that she had waited an immeasurable length of time. Would Herbert never come? She wished the interview over and done with. And afterward? This must end their familiar relations that looked so pleasant now, in spite of frequent disagreements, in which, Helen was forced to admit, it was always she who made the quarrel.

He would never trust her again, and to feel that he would not was enough of itself to seal her lips in what Mrs. Raynor termed "that obstinate Herbert silence."

At last a servant came to say that Mr. Herbert had asked to see her; he was waiting in the library.

Helen felt a sudden shrinking from the interview, but in an instant the consciousness roused her to hot anger against herself. The color rushed back to her cheeks and her eyes grew brilliant with excitement. It was a very proud, haughty-looking woman who presently appeared before the visitor.

"Here are the letters," Herbert said, at once, holding out the packet.

"I owe you many thanks," she replied, in a voice that matched her face.

"None whatever, I assure you," he rejoined.

The powerful effort required to subdue an emotion he was determined not to betray made his tone sound cold, almost indifferent.

So, she had been correct in her belief—he had judged her already! That was enough. The sooner their ways

parted now, the better. She would go to Europe and live there; if she could avoid it, she would never see him again. He was harder than a rock; having no feeling, he could not comprehend it in another. And she loved him—that was the deepest humiliation of all! She was as weak and silly as any girl in a novel. All the same, there was the truth, and she must face it. Now his former indifference had deepened into condemnation; perhaps he condescended to throw in a little pity. At least, she would convince him this was wasted.

"I fancy Mr. Deerforth would have given me the letters, finally, if you had not come in," she said, quickly.

Woman-like, she must needs hurt herself as much as she could—hurt him, too, if it were possible.

"I dare say he might," returned Herbert, in a smooth, even voice. "He said so, but he did not know I heard him."

"He would not give you that satisfaction. Well, I am glad there is something decent in him; he is like the generality of his sex, though, no doubt."

"I think he is a somewhat uncommon compound of utter lack of moral perception and generous impulses," said Herbert. "But he should not be judged by his conduct to-day; he was half mad."

"Is he ruined?"

"That will depend on himself. Just one thing, Helen—excuse me for saying it—you need fear no further annoyance."

She grew scarlet, then white. The stern face and matter-of-fact tone, which hid the emotion that shook his very soul, seemed to her signs of contemptuous commiseration, and drove her nearly frantic.

"You told me a while ago that I was deteriorating; you must be charmed to have this proof of your infallible judgment," she exclaimed. "But I am tired of being judged; I will have no more of it. I determined on my way home to make your conduct in this thing the test, and here you stand look-

ing at me as if I were too poor a creature even to be blamed severely!"

"Helen! Helen!"

"If I could explain, I would not. Nor will I endure your righteous forbearance. See here, Ralph Herbert, you and I have come to the end! You may believe what you like, but you shall not show it to my face."

"Wait, Helen—listen!"

"I will not. I mean to go away; you shall never be troubled about any of my affairs again. 'My letters!' And you bring them with the air of a prosecuting attorney making a prisoner bear evidence against himself."

He was as white as she, now, and scarcely less agitated.

"I think I will tell you the exact truth at last," he said, with the ghost of a smile quivering across his lips. "I never expected to—I knew it would be of no use; but at least it will prove to you how mistaken you are."

"I think you will find that difficult," returned she, trying hard to control herself.

"I love you," he said; "that is all. If I thought you could ever learn to care enough to—but a man ought to have the courage to ask for what he wants. I have been a coward because I had no hope; but I mean to ask now. Helen, will you marry me?"

"That is carrying chivalry too far," she exclaimed. "So, there is something I do not yet understand; you think I am in some danger from that man; you wish to protect me! A great many men have asked me to marry them, but this is the first time one ever did so from pity."

"I love you," he answered; "that is my one reason."

"Those letters were to Deerforth's cousin, Charles Voorhies."

"But you did not write them."

"You heard Deerforth threaten me; he said you knew my writing—"

"I know Blanche Sinclair's also, though few persons can distinguish between the two. Of course, nothing could have induced me to look at the letters; but I knew who wrote them."

"You did not tell him!"

"No; for, in his insanity, he might have threatened us with Sydney."

Helen sat down, fairly breathless from relief.

"How good you are!" she sighed; "and I was misjudging you so cruelly!"

"Never mind that. I wish an answer to my question."

"Let me go tell Blanche that we have the letters."

"It will do her good to be anxious—only she isn't; she put her burden on you, as usual. Are you going to answer, Helen?"

"And how did you know about the letters?"

"I know the whole story—which you don't. She was secretly married to Voorhies, just before he started for Jamaica."

"Ralph! impossible!"

"They were married all the same. You and your sister-in-law were in Europe. When poor Charles was killed by the fall from his horse, Deerforth was in Jamaica; of course, he took charge of everything, so he got those letters—"

"Married! it seems incredible!"

"Your wonderment can wait; I want an answer, Helen! I love you. Can you ever learn to care for me?"

"I learned a great while ago," she half-whispered.

Then two very happy people stood alone in the library, and there followed the broken talk where a look finished a sentence better than words—the old story, always new.

"I did not marry George Vincent for his money," Helen said. "When all other arguments failed, my stepmother taunted me with loving you—declared that you suspected it and sneered—that was enough!"

Then the talk drifted back to the present; they forgot that time existed, until there came an interruption—Blanche Sinclair in search of her cousin. One glance at the pair told her the truth.

"Bless us and save us!" she exclaimed. "You don't mean it!"

"I do," said Herbert, "and I hope Helen does."

"I'd like to kiss you both—I will!" cried Blanche.

"We have borne worse inflictions," Herbert declared. Like Helen and most other persons, he could not help being fond of the conscienceless little witch.

"I was sure you would find each other out some time," she said. Then she perceived the packet on the table, and pounced on it with a scream of delight. "My letters—my letters! You heavenly Ralph! And what I have suffered, oh, no mortal can imagine!"

She ran to the hearth where a fire was burning, opened the packet and began throwing the letters one by one into the flames. When they looked toward her again, she sat in a low chair, reading a letter and weeping softly.

"Voorhies's letter," Herbert whispered to Helen. "I believe it will be better to tell her that we know."

So they did, and since neither reproached her, she was glad to have the secret off her mind.

"I couldn't refuse," she said; "poor Charley was so desperate at the idea

of leaving me! But as soon as he had gone I knew I didn't really love him. Poor Charley! And until less than a year ago Jock did not know who the woman was, and I only found out last Autumn that the letters existed and were in his hands."

The tell-tale witnesses were burned; the past seemed a dream to the ill-balanced creature, who possessed after all more potentialities for good than for evil.

"I'll never have another secret," she vowed, "and I never really loved anybody but Sydney! And, oh, I fell asleep up-stairs and I had such a strange dream about Jock Deerforth! I thought we found him dead—I don't know where it was—but I wasn't afraid, somehow. And he said he was sorry he had worried us; then we were going to dance. It didn't seem odd—yet I knew he was dead. Poor Jock! I hope we needn't quarrel with him for good and all. There isn't such another partner—he does hold one so delightfully! Try to forgive him by next Winter, Helen! Oh, you will be Mrs. Herbert before then! Do let me go and tell Alice—mayn't I?"



A PARADOX

EACH birthday it is just like this:

For every year I get a kiss.

This time she says she's twenty-two;

And while I know her count is true,

It would not make her heart grow colder

If I should make her out much older.

J. J. O'CONNELL.



IT WAS A BLOW

"WHAT'S the matter?" said the certified cheque to the 1,000-dollar bill, as he lay on the paying-teller's desk. "You seem disturbed."

"I am," said the 1,000-dollar bill; "I find I've been sitting too close to a draft."

THE OLD CAFÉ

By Arthur Macy

YOU know,
Don't you, Joe,
Those merry evenings, long ago?
You know the room, the narrow stair,
The wreaths of smoke that circled there,
The corner table where we sat
For hours in after-dinner chat,
And magnified
Our little world inside?
You know,
Don't you, Joe?

Ah, those nights divine!
The simple, frugal wine,
The airs on crude Italian strings,
The joyous, harmless revelings,
Just fit for us—or kings!
At times a quaint and wickered flask
Of rare Chianti; or, from the homelier cask
Of modest Pilsener, a stein or so
Amid the merry talk would flow;
Or red Bordeaux,
From vines that grew where dear Montaigne
Held his domain.
And you remember that dark eye,
None too shy;
In fact, she seemed a bit too free
For you and me.
You know,
Don't you, Joe?

Then Pegasus I knew,
And then I read to you
My callow rhymes
So many, many times;
And something in the place
Lent them a certain grace,
Until I scarce believed them mine,
Under the magic of the wine.
But now I read them o'er
And see grave faults I had not seen before,
And wonder how
You could have listened with such placid brow,

THE SMART SET

And somehow apprehend
 You sank the critic in the friend.
 You know,
 Don't you, Joe?

And when we talked of books,
 How learned were our looks!
 And few the bards we could not quote,
 From gay Catullus' lines to Milton's purer note.
 Mayhap we now are wiser men,
 But we knew more than all the scholars then;
 And our conceit
 Was grand, ineffable, complete!
 We know,
 Don't we, Joe?

Gone are those golden nights
 Of innocent, bohemian delights,
 And we are getting on;
 And anon
 Years sad and tremulous
 May be in store for us.
 But, should we ever meet
 Upon some quiet street,
 And you discover in an old man's eye
 Some transient sparkle of the days gone by,
 Then you will guess, perchance,
 The meaning of the glance.
 You'll know,
 Won't you, Joe?



IN THE FUTURE

WIFE—How do you like the mince-pie tabloids, John?

HUSBAND—They're not bad, but you ought to taste the tabloids my mother used to make.



MR. BENTLEY—Isn't that animal too large for a guinea pig?

MR. TAKYSTER—I think it is too small. I know that I should never pay twenty-one shillings for such a little pig.



WHAT we think we know we know we think.

ESTHER KAHN

By Arthur Symons

ESTHER KAHN was born in one of those dark, evil-smelling streets with strange corners which lie about the docks. It was a quiet street, which seemed to lead nowhere, but to stand aside, for some not quite honest purpose of its own. The blinds of some of these houses were always drawn; shutters were nailed over some of the windows. Few people passed; there were never many children playing in the road; the women did not stand talking at their open doors. The doors opened and shut quietly; dark faces looked out from behind the windows; the Jews who lived there seemed always to be at work, bending over their tables, sewing and cutting, or else hurrying in and out with bundles of clothes under their arms, going and coming from the tailors for whom they worked. The Kahns all worked at tailoring; Esther's father and mother and grandmother, her elder brother and her two elder sisters. One did seaming, another button-holing, another sewed on buttons; and on the poor pay they got for that seven had to live.

As a child Esther had a strange terror of the street in which she lived. She was never sure whether something dreadful had just happened there, or whether it was just going to happen. But she was always in suspense. She was tormented with the fear of knowing what went on behind those nailed shutters. She made up stories about the houses, but the stories never satisfied her. She imagined some great, vague gesture—not an incident, but a gesture—and it hung

in the air, suspended like a shadow. The gestures of people always meant more to her than their words; they seemed to have a secret meaning of their own, which the words never quite interpreted. She was always unconsciously on the watch for their meaning.

At night, after supper, the others used to sit around the table, talking eagerly. Esther would get up and draw her chair into the corner by the door, and for a time she would watch them, as if she were looking on at something, something with which she had no concern, though it interested her for its outline and movement. She saw her father's keen profile, the great, hooked nose, the black, prominent, shifty eye, the tangled black hair straggling over the shirt-collar; her mother, large, placid, with masses of black, straight hair coiled low over her sallow cheeks; the two sisters, sharp and voluble, never at rest for a moment; the brother with his air of insolent assurance, an immense self-satisfaction hooded under his beautifully curved eyelids; the grandmother, with her bent and mountainous shoulders, the vivid malice of her eyes, her hundreds of wrinkles. All these people, who had so many interests in common, who thought of the same things, cared for the same things, seemed so fond of one another in an instinctive way, with so much hostility for other people not related to them, sat there night after night, in the same attitudes, always as eager for the events of to-day as they had been for the events of yesterday. Every-

thing mattered immensely to them, and especially their part in things; and no one thing seemed to matter more than any other thing. Esther cared only to look on; nothing mattered to her; she had no interest in their interests; she was not sure that she cared for them more than she would care for other people; they were what she supposed real life was, and that was a thing in which she had only a disinterested curiosity.

Sometimes, when she had been watching them until they had all seemed to fade away and form again in a kind of vision more precise than the reality, she would lose sight of them altogether and sit gazing straight before her, her eyes wide open, her lips parted. Her hand would make an unconscious movement, as if she were accompanying some grave words with an appropriate gesture; and Becky would generally see it and burst into a mocking laugh and ask her whom she was mimicking.

"Don't notice her," the mother once said; "she's not a human child, she's a monkey; she's clutching out after a soul, as they do. They look like little men, but they know they're not men, and they try to be; that's why they mimic us."

Esther was very angry; she said to herself that she would be more careful in future not to show anything that she was feeling.

At thirteen Esther looked a woman. She was large-boned, with very small hands and feet, and her body seemed to be generally asleep, in a kind of brooding lethargy. She had her mother's hair, masses of it, but softer, with a faint natural wave in it. Her face was oval, smooth in outline, with a nose just Jewish enough for the beauty of suave curves and unemphatic outlines. The lips were thick, red, strong like a bow. The whole face seemed to await, with an infinite patience, some moulding and awakening force, which might have its way with it. It wanted nothing, anticipated nothing; it waited. Only the

eyes put life into the mask, and the eyes were the eyes of the tribe; they had no personal meaning in what seemed to be their mystery; they were ready to fascinate innocently, to be intolerably ambiguous without intention; they were fathomless with mere sleep, the unconscious dream which is in the eyes of animals.

Esther was neither clever nor stupid; she was inert. She did as little in the house as she could, but when she had to take her share in the stitching she stitched more neatly than any of the others, though very slowly. She despised it, in her languid, smouldering way, partly because it was work and partly because it made her prick her fingers, and the skin grew hard and ragged where the point of the needle had scratched it. She liked her skin to be quite smooth, but all the glycerine she rubbed into it at night would not take out the mark of the needle. It seemed to her like the badge of her slavery.

She would rather not have been a Jewess; that, too, was a kind of badge, marking her out from other people; she wished to be let alone, to have her own way without other people's help or hindrance. She had no definite consciousness of what her own way was to be; she was only conscious, as yet, of the ways that would certainly not be hers. She would not think only of making money, like her mother, nor of being thought clever, like Becky, nor of being admired because she had good looks and dressed smartly, like Mina. All these things required an effort, and Esther was lazy. She wished to be admired, and to have money, of course, and she did not wish people to think her stupid; but all this was to come to her, she knew, because of some fortunate quality in herself, as yet undiscovered. Then she would shake off everything that now clung to her, like a worn-out garment that one keeps only until one can replace it. She saw herself rolling away in a carriage, and she would never come back; and it would be like a revenge on whatever it was that kept her stifling in this

mean street; she longed to be cruelly revenged.

As it was, her single keen pleasure was in going to the theatre with her brother or her sisters; she cared nothing for the music-halls and preferred staying at home to going with the others when they went to the Pavilion or the Foresters. But when there was a melodrama at the Standard, or at the Elephant and Castle, she would wait and struggle outside the door and up the narrow, winding stairs, for a place as near the front of the gallery as she could get. Once inside, she would never speak, but she would sit staring at the people on the stage as if they hypnotized her. She never criticized the play, as the others did; the play did not seem to matter; she lived in it without will or choice, merely because it was there and her eyes were on it.

But after it was over and they were at home again, she would become suddenly voluble as she discussed the merits of the acting. She had no hesitations, was certain that she was always in the right and became furious if any one contradicted her. She saw each part as a whole and she blamed the actors for not being consistent with themselves. She could not understand how they could make a mistake. It was so simple, there were no two ways of doing anything. To go wrong was as if you said no when you meant yes; it must be wilful.

"You ought to do it yourself, Esther," said her sisters, when they were tired of her criticisms. They meant to be satirical, but Esther said, seriously enough: "Yes, I could do it; but so could that woman if she would let herself alone. Why did she try to be something else all the time?"

Time went slowly with Esther; but when she was seventeen she was still sewing at home and still waiting. Nothing had come to her of all that she had expected. Two of her cousins and a neighbor or two had sought to marry her; but she had refused them, contemptuously. To her sluggish instinct men seemed only good for mak-

ing money—they had not come to have any definite personal meaning for her. A little man called Joel, who had talked to her passionately about love, and had cried when she refused him, seemed to her an unintelligible and ridiculous kind of animal. When she dreamed of the future, there was never any one of that sort making fine speeches to her.

But, gradually, her own real purpose in life had become clear. She was to be an actress. She said nothing about it at home, but she began to go around to the managers of the small theatres in the neighborhood, asking for an engagement. After a long time a manager gave her a small part. The piece was called "The Wages of Sin," and she was to be the servant who opens the door in the first act to the man who is going to be the murderer in the second act, and then identifies him in the fourth act.

Esther went home quietly and said nothing until supper-time. Then she remarked to her mother: "I am going on the stage."

"That's very likely," said her mother, with a sarcastic smile; "and when do you go on, pray?"

"On Monday night," said Esther.

"You don't mean it!" said her mother.

"Indeed I mean it," said Esther, "and I've got my part. I'm to be the servant in 'The Wages of Sin.'"

Her brother laughed. "I know," he said, "she speaks two words twice."

"You are right," said Esther; "will you come on Monday, and hear how I say them?"

When Esther had made up her mind to do anything, they all knew that she always did it. Her father talked to her seriously. Her mother said: "You are much too lazy, Esther; you will never get on." They told her that she was taking the bread out of their mouths, and it was certain she would never put it back again. "If I get on," said Esther, "I shall pay you back exactly what I would have earned, as long as you keep me. Is that a bargain? I know I shall get on, and you won't

repent of it. You had better let me do as I wish—it will pay.”

They shook their heads, looked at Esther, who sat there with her lips tight shut, and a queer, hard look in her eyes—those eyes that were trying not to seem exultant; they looked at one another, shook their heads again—and consented. The old grandmother mumbled something fiercely, but as it sounded like bad words and they never knew what Old Testament language she would use, they did not ask her what she meant.

On Monday Esther made her first appearance on the stage. Her mother said to her, afterward: “I thought nothing of you, Esther; you were just like any ordinary servant.” Becky asked her if she had felt nervous. She shook her head; it had seemed quite natural to her, she said. She did not tell them that a great wave of triumph had swept over her as she felt the heat of the gas footlights come up into her eyes and saw the floating cluster of white faces rising out of a solid mass of indistinguishable darkness. In that instant she drew into her nostrils the breath of life.

Esther had a small part to under-study, and before long she had the chance of playing it. The manager said nothing to her, but soon afterward he told her to under-study a more important part. She never had the chance to play it, but when the next piece was put on at the theatre, she was given a part of her own. She began to make a little money and, as she had promised, she paid so much a week to her parents for keeping her. They gained by the bargain, so they did not ask her to come back to the stitching. Mrs. Kahn sometimes spoke of her daughter to the neighbors with a certain languid pride; Esther was making her way.

Esther did make her way, rapidly. One day the manager of a West End theatre came down to see her; he engaged her at once to play a small but difficult part in an ambitious kind of melodrama that he was bringing out. She did it capably, satisfied the man-

ager, was given a better part, did that well, was engaged by another manager and, in short, began to be looked upon as a promising actress. The papers praised her with moderation; some of the younger critics, who admired her type, praised her more than she deserved. She was making money; she had come to live in rooms of her own, off the Strand. At twenty-one she had done, in a measure, what she wished to do; but she was not satisfied with herself. She had always known that she could act, but how well could she act? Would she never be able to act any better than this? She had drifted into the life of the stage as naturally as if she had never known anything else; she was at home, comfortable, able to do what many others could not do. But she wished to be a great actress.

An old actor, a Jew, Nathan Quellen, who had taken a paternal interest in her and who helped her with all the good advice that he had never taken to himself, was fond of saying that the remedy was in her own hands.

“My dear Esther,” he would tell her, smoothing his long gray hair down over his forehead, “you must take a lover; you must fall in love—there’s no other way. You think you can act, and you have never felt anything worse than a cut finger! Why, it’s an absurdity! Wait till you know the only thing worth knowing; till then you’re in short frocks and a pinafore.”

He cited examples, he condensed the biographies of the great actresses for her benefit. He found one lesson in them all, and he was sincere in his reading of history as he saw it. He talked, argued, protested; the matter seriously troubled him. He felt he was giving Esther good advice; he wished her to be the thing she longed to be. Esther knew it and thanked him, without smiling; she sat brooding over his words—she never argued against them. She believed much of what he said; but was the remedy, as he said, in her own hands? It did not seem so.

As yet no man had spoken to her

heart. She had the sluggish blood of a really profound animal nature. She saw men calmly, as calmly as when little Joel had cried because she would not marry him. Joel still came to see her sometimes, with the same entreaty in his eyes, not daring to speak it. Other men, very different men, had made love to her in very different ways. They had seemed to be trying to drive a hard bargain, to get the better of her in a matter of business; and her native cunning had kept her easily on the better side of the bargain. She was resolved to be a business woman in the old trade of the affections; no one should buy or sell of her except at her own price, and she set the price vastly high.

Yet Quellen's words set her thinking. Was there, after all, but one way to study for the stage? All the examples pointed to it and, what was worse, she felt it might be true. She saw exactly where her acting stopped short.

She looked around her with practical eyes, not seeming to herself to be doing anything unusual or unlikely to succeed in its purpose. Deliberately she thought over all the men she knew; but who was there whom it would be possible to take seriously? She could think of only one man—Philip Haygarth.

Philip Haygarth was a man of six-and-thirty, who had been writing plays and having them acted, with only a moderate success, for nearly ten years. He was one of the accepted men, a man whose plays were treated respectfully, and he had the reputation of being much cleverer than his plays. He was short, dark, neat, very worldly-looking, with thin lips and reflective, not quite honest, eyes. His manner was cold, restrained, with a mingling of insolence and diffidence. He was a hard worker and a somewhat deliberately hard liver. He avoided society and preferred to find his relaxation among people with whom one did not need to keep up appearances, or talk sentiment, or pay afternoon calls. He admired Esther Kahn as an actress, though with many reservations; and he

admired her as a woman, more than he had ever admired anybody else. She appealed to all his tastes; she ended by absorbing almost the whole of those interests and those hours which he set apart for such matters.

He made love to Esther much more skilfully than any of her other lovers, and, though she saw through his plans as clearly as he wished her to see through them, she was grateful to him for a certain finesse in his manner of approach. He never mentioned the word "love," except to jest at it; he concealed even the extent to which he was really disturbed by her presence; his words spoke only of friendship and of general topics. And yet there could never be any doubt as to his meaning; his whole attitude was a patient waiting. He interested her. Here, then, was the man for her purpose. With his admirable tact, he spared her the least difficulty in making her meaning clear. He congratulated himself on a prize; she congratulated herself on the accomplishment of a duty.

Days and weeks passed, and Esther scrutinized herself with a distinct sense of disappointment. She had no moral feeling in the matter; she was her own property, it had always seemed to her, free to dispose of as she pleased. The business element in her nature persisted. This bargain, this infinitely important bargain had been concluded, with open eyes, with a full sense of responsibility, for a purpose—the purpose for which she lived! What was the result?

She could see no result. The world had in no sense changed for her, as she had been supposing it would change; a new excitement had come into her life and that was all. She wondered what it was that a woman was expected to feel under the circumstances, and why she had not felt it. How different had been her feeling when she walked across the stage for the first time! That had really been a new life, or the very beginning of life. But this was no more than

a delightful episode, hardly to be disentangled from the visit to Paris which had accompanied it.

And then, art! She had learned nothing. No new thrill came into the words she spoke; her eyes, as they looked across the footlights, remembered nothing, had nothing new to tell.

And so she turned, with all the more interest, an interest almost impersonal, to Philip Haygarth when he talked to her about acting and the drama, when he elaborated his theories which, she was aware, occupied him more than she occupied him. He was one of those creative critics who can do every man's work but their own. When he sat down to write his own plays, something dry and hard came into the words, the life ebbed out of those imaginary people who had been so real to him, whom he had made so real to others as he talked. He constructed admirably and was an unerring judge of the construction of plays; and he had a sense of acting which was like the sense that a fine actor might have, if he could be himself and also some one looking on at himself. He not only knew what should be done, but exactly why it should be done. Little suspecting that he had been chosen for the purpose, though in so different a manner, he set himself to teach her art to Esther.

He made her go through the great parts with him; she was *Juliet*, *Lady Macbeth*, *Cleopatra*; he taught her how to speak verse and how to feel the accent of speech in verse, another kind of speech than prose speech; he trained her voice to take hold of the harmonies that lie in words themselves; and she caught them, by ear, as one born to speak many languages catches a foreign language. She went through Ibsen as she had gone through Shakespeare; and Haygarth showed her how to take hold of this very different subject-matter, so definite and so elusive. And they studied good acting-plays together, worthless plays that gave the actress opportu-

nities to create something out of nothing. Together they saw Duse and Sarah Bernhardt; and they had seen Réjane in Paris, in crudely tragic parts; and they studied the English stage, to find out why it maintained itself at so stiff a distance from nature. She went on acting all the time, always acting with more certainty; and at last she attempted more serious parts, which she learned with Haygarth at her elbow.

She had to be taught her part as a child is taught its lesson; word by word, intonation by intonation. She read it over, not really knowing what it was about; she learned it by heart mechanically, getting the words into her memory first. Then the meaning had to be explained to her, scene by scene, and she had to say the words over until she had found the right accent. Once found, she never forgot it; she could repeat it identically at any moment; there were no variations to allow for. Until that moment she was reaching out blindly in the dark, feeling about her with uncertain fingers.

And, with her, the understanding came with the power of expression, sometimes seeming really to proceed from the sound to the sense, from the gesture inward. Show her how it should be done, and she knew why it should be done; sound the right note in her ears, arrest her at the moment when the note came right, and she understood, by a backward process, why the note should sound thus. Her mind worked, but it worked under suggestion, as the hypnotists say; the idea had to come to her through the instinct, or it would never come.

As Esther found herself, almost unconsciously, becoming what she had dreamed of becoming, what she had longed to become, and, after all, through Philip Haygarth, a more personal feeling began to grow up in her heart toward this lover who had found his way to her, not through the senses, but through the mind. A kind of domesticity had crept into

their relations, and this drew Esther nearer to him. She began to feel that he belonged to her. He had never, she knew, been wholly absorbed in her, and she had delighted him by showing no jealousy, no anxiety to keep him. As long as she remained so, he felt that she had a sure hold on him. But now she began to change, to concern herself more with his doings, to assert her right to him, as she had never hitherto cared to do. He chafed a little at what seemed an unnecessary devotion.

Love, with Esther, had come slowly, taking his time on the journey; but he came to take possession. To work at her art was to please Philip Haygarth; she worked now with a double purpose. And she made surprising advances as an actress. People began to speculate: had she genius, or was this only an astonishingly developed talent, which could go so far and no farther?

For, in this finished method, which seemed so spontaneous and yet at the same time so deliberate, there seemed still to be something, some slight, essential thing, almost unaccountably lacking. What was it? Was it a fundamental lack, that could never be supplied? Or would that slight, essential thing, as her admirers prophesied, one day be supplied? They waited.

Esther was now really happy, for the first time in her life; and as she looked back over those years, in the street by the docks, when she had lived alone in the midst of her family, and since then, when she had lived alone, working, not finding the time long, nor wishing it to go more slowly, she felt a kind of surprise at herself. How could she have gone through it all? She had not even been bored. She had had a purpose, and now that she was achieving that purpose, the thing itself seemed hardly to matter. Her art kept pace with her life; she was giving up nothing in return for happiness—but she had come to prize the happiness, her love, beyond all things.

She knew that Haygarth was proud of her, that he looked upon her talent—genius, whatever it was—as partly the work of his hands. It pleased her that this should be so; it seemed to bind him more tightly to her.

In this she was mistaken, as most women are mistaken when they ask themselves what it is in them that holds their lovers. The actress interested Haygarth greatly, but the actress interested him as a problem, as something quite apart from his feelings as a man, as a lover. He had been attracted by the woman, by what was somber and unexplained in her eyes, by the sleepy grace of her movements, by the magnetism that seemed to drowse in her. He had made love to her precisely as he would have made love to an ignorant, beautiful creature who walked on in some corner of a Drury Lane melodrama. On principle, he did not like clever women. Esther, it is true, was not clever, in the ordinary, tiresome sense; and her startling intuitions, in matters of acting, had not repelled him, as an exhibition of the capabilities of a woman, while they preoccupied him for a long time in that part of his brain which worked critically upon any interesting material. But nothing that she could do as an artiste made the least difference to his feeling about her as a woman; his pride in her was like his pride in a play that he had written finely and put aside—to be glanced at from time to time with cool satisfaction. He had his own very deliberate theory of values and one value was never allowed to interfere with another. A devoted, discreet amateur of woman, he appreciated women really for their own sakes, with an unflattering simplicity. And for a time Esther absorbed him almost wholly.

He had been quite content with their relations as they were before she fell seriously in love with him, and this new, profound feeling, which he had never even dreaded, somewhat disturbed him. She was adopting the attitude of a wife, and he had

no ambition to play the part of a husband. The affections were always rather a strain upon him; he liked something a little less serious and a little more exciting.

Esther understood nothing that was going on in Philip Haygarth's mind, and when he began to seem colder to her, when she saw less of him, and then less, it seemed to her that she could still appeal to him by her art and still touch him by her devotion. As her warmth seemed more and more to threaten his liberty, the impulse to tug at his chain became harder to resist. His continued, unvarying interest in her acting, his patience in helping her, in working with her, kept her for some time from realizing how little was left now of the more personal feeling. It was with sharp surprise, as well as with a blinding rage, that she discovered one day, beyond possibility of mistake, that she had a rival and that Haygarth was only doling out to her the time left over from that rival.

It was an Italian, a young girl who had come over to London with an organ-grinder and who posed for sculptors—when she could get a sitting. It was a girl who could barely read and write, an insignificant creature, a peasant from the Campagna, who had nothing but her good looks and the distinction of her attitudes. Esther was beside herself with rage, jealousy, mortification; she loved and she could not pardon. There was a scene of unmeasured violence. Haygarth was cruel, almost with intention; and they parted, Esther feeling as if her life had been broken sharply in two.

She was at the last rehearsals of a new play by Haygarth, a play in which he had tried for once to be tragic in the bare, straightforward way of the things that really happen. She went through the rehearsals absent-mindedly, repeating her words, which he had taught her how to say, but scarcely attending to their meaning. Another thought was at work behind this mechanical speech, a continual throb of remembrance, going on mo-

notonously. Her mind was full of other words, which she had heard as if an inner voice were repeating them; her mind made up pictures, which seemed to pass slowly before her eyes—Haygarth and the other woman. At the last rehearsal Quellen came to her, and, ironically as she thought, complimented her on her performance. But she meant, when the night came, not to fail.

When the night came, she said to herself that she was calm, that she would be able to concentrate herself on her acting and act just as usual. But, as she stood in the wings, waiting for the moment to come, her eyes went straight to the eyes of the other woman, the Italian model, the organ-grinder's girl, who sat, smiling contentedly, in the front of a box, turning her head sometimes to speak to some one behind her, hidden by the curtain. She was dressed in black, with a rose in her hair, and she was triumphantly beautiful. Esther shuddered as if she had been struck; the blood rushed into her forehead and swelled and beat against her eyes. Then, with an immense effort, she cleared her mind of everything but the task before her. Every nerve in her body lived with a separate life as she opened the door at the back of the stage and stood motionless under the eyes of the audience. There was something in the manner of her entrance that seemed to strike the fatal note of the play. She had never been more restrained, more effortless; she seemed scarcely to be acting; only, a magnetic current seemed to have been set in motion between her and those who were watching her. They held their breaths, as if they were assisting at a real tragedy; as if, at any moment, this acting might give place to some horrible, naked passion of nature itself. The curtain rose and rose again at the end of the first act; and she stood there, bowing gravely, in what seemed a deliberate continuation, into that interval, of the sentiment of the piece. Her dresses were taken off her and put on her, for each act, as if she had been a lay-figure. Once, in the second act,

she looked up at the box; the Italian woman was smiling emptily, but Haygarth, taking no notice of her, was leaning forward with his eyes fixed on the stage. After the third act he sent to Esther's dressing-room a fervent note, begging to be allowed to see her. She had made his play, he said, and she had made herself a great actress. She crumpled the note fiercely, put it carefully into her jewel-box and refused to see him. In the last act she had to die, after the manner of the Lady of the Camellias, waiting for the lover who, in this case, never came. The pathos of her acting was almost unbearable, and, still, it seemed not like acting at all. The curtain went down on a great actress.

Esther went home stunned, only partly realizing what she had done, or how she had done it. She read again

the note from Haygarth, but unforgivingly—as she did the letter that came from him in the morning. As reflection returned, through all the confused suffering and excitement, to her deliberate, automatic nature, in which a great shock had brought about a kind of release, she realized that all she had wanted during most of her life had at last come about. The note had been struck—she had responded to it, as she responded to every suggestion, faultlessly; she knew that she could repeat the note, whenever she wished, now that she had once found it. There would be no variation to allow for—the actress was made at last. She might take back her lover, or never see him again—it would make no difference; it would make no difference, she repeated, over and over again, weeping uncontrollable tears.



THE LUTANIST

WAN, undulant fingers thrird the silvern strings
 With amorous grace and listless languishings.
 Her lute outmocks the music of the merle!
 Each small, sweet note drops, perfect as a pearl,
 Into soft seas of air, until again
 These wail like lovers, hopeless in their pain.

Now while the hills stretch purple and rose-red,
 And westward the sun sets, and overhead
 The plane-leaves shiver just perceptibly,
 Touched by the little wind that will not die—
 Now is the season to give ear to her
 Than whom no lutanist is perfecter.

Come, Amaryllis, play till Love's white star
 And quickening airs and thickening dews debar!
 Thou of the hair outblown and eyes that glisten,
 Play, for thy faithful all are here to listen.
 Never can poet sing his song, until
 Thine own weird music set the heart a-thrill!

VICTOR PLARR.



CERTAIN women are uncertain.

A BROKER'S BILLET-DOUX

MYRTILLA, since a simple song
 Can reach you at a distance,
 And since in rhyme love moves along
 The line of least resistance,
 I leave awhile the dizzy whirl
 Around the tape and ticker,
 And yield my thoughts to you, dear girl,
 And feel my heart beat quicker.

From all the tumult of the Street
 I turn, and let my fancies
 Go wandering where life is sweet
 And earth a green expanse is;
 A little while the picturesque—
 The woods, the fields, the ocean—
 Then back to prosy book and desk
 And 'Change's wild commotion.

The stocks and bonds that keep me here
 Are things extremely stupid;
 Just now my preference, my dear,
 Are stocks and bonds of Cupid;
 His stocks are firm and sure to pay
 Good dividends in kisses;
 His bonds—a marriage bond some day—
 My dearest dream of bliss is.

Good-bye! I hear a sound that means
 The market's growing active,
 So Fancy must forsake the scenes
 More tempting and attractive.
 A million is my goal, and when
 The Fates see fit to send it,
 I mean to marry you, and then
 Ask you to help me spend it.

FELIX CARMEN.



ETIQUETTE

MRS. BLANK—Is your husband going to Mrs. Jason's funeral?
 MRS. DASH—Decidedly not! She never returned my last call.

AN EXPERIMENT IN VERACITY

By Stuart F. Patterson

I FOUND Mrs. Apthorp seated behind the tea-table.

"I have dropped in," I remarked, as I advanced toward her, "to announce my engagement."

Mrs. Apthorp greeted me with a smile of welcome and made a place for me beside her on the divan.

"Won't you have a cup of tea?" she asked.

"Thank you, I will." And I took my seat somewhat abashed. I had expected to create a small sensation.

"No sugar, please." This, in reply to the waving of the sugar-tongs inquiringly.

My hostess, for a time, was absorbed in the brew, and I took a sandwich.

"So you are engaged, are you?" she remarked, pouring the tea. "How extremely odd! Of course, I wouldn't hurt your feelings, but I must say we expected something startling and original from you."

"An elopement?" I ventured.

"Something in that line. However, I suppose things are for the best." Mrs. Apthorp sighed, resignedly.

I was distinctly embarrassed at the lack of interest in the momentous event in my life.

"Would you care to hear the young lady's name?" said I.

"Oh, I probably know her—her type, at least," replied Mrs. Apthorp, airily. "You see, so many of our young men are getting engaged of late." My hand, following the direction of the speaker's glance, touched the thinned locks on my temple and she smiled sweetly at her palpable hit.

I am not, it is true, as young as I was at one time. Mrs. Apthorp is well aware how true this is.

"I presume she is an angel," said my hostess, indifferently.

"While she has most of the virtues of an angel, she has further and additional attractions," I answered, stoutly.

"Such as money and clothes, I suppose," said Mrs. Apthorp, refilling my tea-cup.

"You choose to jest this afternoon, Mrs. Apthorp," I said; "I trust you do not disapprove."

"Indeed, no! I do not consider a man married a man spoiled."

Mrs. Apthorp reclined against the cushions and regarded me quizzically. My position was decidedly uncomfortable. I blush to confess that a certain satisfaction at the sight of Mrs. Apthorp, with her fine features, pretty hair and pleasing gown, dimmed the sorrow of absence from my innamorata. I have since thought that Mrs. Apthorp suspected this.

"How Jack will laugh!" she exclaimed, indulging in that show of emotion herself.

"Jack," I said, "is an unromantic brute."

"I'm afraid he is, you know," she replied, soberly. "Did I ever tell you how he proposed to me? I suppose you are interested in such things, now."

"I have been before. You remember once at Fortress——"

"Of course," she interrupted; "but this is very different."

"Very, indeed," I assented.

"Well, you see, Jack had been

hanging around ever so long, since—well, since that other time.”

“Fortress——” I began.

“Yes, that time,” she continued, nodding assent. “But whenever we were alone he started to talk of hunters and leaders and spike-teams and that sort of thing. Of course, he took me to the horse show nearly every night when that was on, but when we arrived he’d drag me down among the stalls and talk the most scandalous family details of the prize-winners. My familiarity with the stud-book quite took my family off their feet. As time went on, I began to despair of Jack, but he came around at last. It was really awfully funny. Where do you suppose he proposed to me?”

“In a box-stall, for a venture,” said I.

“Worse. It was at the funeral of Jack’s richest aunt—you know, he has a lot of rich aunts. You see, she died and left Jack hardly anything. He had been led to expect something fine, so, of course, he was feeling very blue about the way the old lady had treated him. His debts were something awful at the time. He saw me there—it was a house funeral—and came and sat near me. He positively refused to sit with the family.”

Mrs. Apthorp paused as if lost in reverie.

“A proposal required considerable diplomacy under the circumstances, I should judge,” I remarked.

“Well, he was sitting very close to me, and I felt his hand clasp mine and hold it, and—well, I let him hold it; and that’s all there was to it.”

“But didn’t he say anything?” I exclaimed.

“Yes; he bent over and whispered, ‘Let’s cut all this and get out.’ We couldn’t, of course; but after it was over we went to look at a new road-cart Jack fancied.”

“The method was direct, at least,” said I, slowly. “And so you were married and lived happily ever after?”

“Practically, yes,” she said. “At first, though, I was very doubtful.

You see, the whole thing—Jack and all—was so different from my idea of what would happen, so different from the time before——” Mrs. Apthorp paused.

“Which was——?” I asked.

“At Fortress Monroe,” she replied, regarding the edge of a tea-cup.

“Ah, I also recollect,” said I. My heart gave an extra thump or two at the name.

“You see,” she went on, “for a time, I really wondered whether it would not have been better if the person at Fortress Monroe——”

“Meaning me,” I put in.

“Why, of course. It was you, wasn’t it?” she assented, looking up at me as if a new and original idea had but now dawned upon her.

More irregularities of my heart!

“Thanks for the recollection,” said I, putting down my empty cup. The spoon rattled in the china.

“Won’t you have another cup of tea? No? Of course, such a silly idea lasted only until I found out what a really fine fellow Jack was, under all his queer, horsey ways. I told him all about the affair, too.” Mrs. Apthorp was smiling again, and my heart had, perforce, to regulate its action.

“You mentioned names, of course?” I inquired.

“Why, yes. I told him all about you, and he was fine about it. Some men would have been a little jealous, don’t you think so? But Jack felt he could trust me.”

“He must have. I’ll thank him for letting me call on you the next time I see him.”

Mrs. Apthorp started at this, I thought.

“It’s not best to mention secrets,” she remarked.

“And this is a secret, then?”

“Yes,” she said.

“What did he say at the startling confession?” I resumed.

“Oh, he said, ‘I’ll be damned!’ or something like that; and he dropped his cigarette on the lace counterpane. I especially remember the counterpane. Jack also burned his hand put-

ting the fire out. It was awfully pretty," she ended, sadly.

"The hand?" I queried.

"No, the counterpane, foolish!" she snapped. If Mrs. Apthorp had dared address me as "foolish" in that particular way years before—at Fortress Monroe, say—I tremble to think of the consequences. However, she had never done so, and now she was Mrs. Apthorp. We sat for a moment or so without speaking, I watching her moving the cups on the table.

"That was a glorious night at Fortress Monroe," I said, softly.

"How large and bright the moon seemed!" she replied, taking up the reminiscent train.

"The moon always seemed larger and brighter when we were young, I suppose," said I.

"But it wasn't, you know," she added.

"We cried for it when very young, I understand; but now, with the arc-light so much improved——"

"Did I understand you to say your fiancée was very wealthy?" Mrs. Apthorp interrupted—inconsequentially, as it seemed to me.

"You did not," I said, "since you have not permitted me to describe her at all."

"Fairly well-off, at least?"

"The wolf avoids the door," I assented.

"Pretty?"

"Rather; not very much so."

"But nice?"

"Oh, very."

"And admires you very much, I suppose?"

"She tells me so."

"Fatuous woman! And you have told her about Fortress Monroe?"

"Not as yet," I admitted.

"But you intend to?"

"What would you advise?" I asked.

"Don't," said she.

"I won't," I cried.

"Because, if you do," Mrs. Apthorp added, "she'll wish to cultivate me and find out my faults, which she'll tell you, to insure you against a return of the moon-madness."

"Never!" I asserted.

The door-bell rang.

"You see, even the moon, old and very feeble, with its glimmer, may dislike to be totally put out by the greater glory."

"Mary," I said, "you know the moon of our youth always seems to us larger and brighter than——"

"Thanks, Bob; you're very kind," Mrs. Apthorp said, as the butler parted the curtains.

I arose.

"Going? Why hurry?"

"I really must be off," I said.

"Well, *au revoir*."

Mrs. Apthorp regarded me fixedly, a smile gradually lighting up her eyes.

"My!" she cried after me, "won't Jack laugh!"

My feelings were more disturbed than they had been in years as I stepped into the cab. Eternal vigilance is, indeed, the price of peace in more than politics.

I arrived at the club in a state of mind very much depressed and sought a quiet corner to think upon the conduct of Mrs. Apthorp. Before long, I saw Jack Apthorp near by, and, longer solitude being unbearable, I went over to his table. I touched the bell as I seated myself.

"How are you, Anderson?" he said, looking up; "how are you?"

"Very fit, thanks. I came over to announce to you my engagement."

"Good!" he cried. "Any money in it?"

I have known Apthorp and his wife long enough to stand this sort of thing without heat.

"I mean my engagement to be married," I answered, assuming an air of stiffness.

"Oh! that so? I beg pardon." I knew he was unrepentant, but waved my hand in acceptance.

"Give me the same thing," he said to the waiter.

"I think I'll take a little absinthe," I added, moodily.

Why, I thought, did he not ask the girl's name? He was generally the extreme of curiosity.

"Awful thing, this engaged business."

I forbore to answer and lighted a cigarette.

"Well, I always like to see you free and independent folk get in trouble—engaged, I mean," Apthorp went on. "Seen that new mare Morton got?"

"I'm not interested in the equine," I replied.

"Oh, of course not. Much safer and consoling to the mind, anyhow, to say nothing of expense." He regarded me closely over the top of his glass. "My, how Mary will laugh!"

There is such a thing as justifiable murder. I found it out at the moment, but I merely frowned.

"I suppose you know how I proposed to Mary, don't you?" he asked, not noting my displeasure.

"No," I answered, quickly, as life took new interest for me. The same event viewed from different sides by two highly interested parties offers a mental problem worth investigation.

"Funny thing," Apthorp went on. "I never meant to do it until the moment, and even now she and I often laugh over it. You see, it was this way. It was down at Cross River—hunting crowd, house-party and all that. I had been trailing a little girl about for years before—Nice little bit of work, too, but didn't know a horse from an ice-pick. I remember trying to teach her to ride, but, Lord! she couldn't sit up unless I had my arm around her. I was rather hard hit, however, and I had a fair chance to win out, if I do say it—running easy—under wraps, I may say, with the rest trailing. And money! Well, about a good twenty thousand per annum. Still, it just shows you what excitement will do. Mary came down there, and I rode about with her a great deal and piped her good style. On the last run of the meet, and a stiff one, whom should I see just ahead of me, taking fences that a great many men would hesitate at, but Mary. And what a seat! She was leading the field, but I pulled up to her just as she sailed over a five-bar, and from a nasty take-off,

too. I lost my head right there. 'Will you marry me?' I yelled. 'If you beat me in!' she yelled back; and we started to race. I won." Apthorp paused to finish his whiskey. "You see, it wasn't quite as sudden as that, for I had known her for years," he added, apologetically. "I broke down the finest mare I ever owned beating her, too. Cost me fifteen hundred at a bargain. Short coupled, but great action; two white feet and a star."

"I beg pardon," I interrupted. My mind was wandering to the early afternoon.

"The mare, I mean," he explained, calmly.

"Oh!" said I, and touched the bell again.

"Expensive proposal, that. Of course, I never told her about the other girl," Apthorp remarked.

"That wouldn't do," I asserted.

"Might cause trouble."

"Very likely," I replied.

"As you're engaged, Anderson, I'll give you a tip. Never tell them anything that's true, because if they find out one thing is true, they'll believe other things they hear, which may not be true."

"The wisdom of the serpent!" I remarked. "I never intend to."

"By the way," he said, "I don't believe you ever had anything to confess, did you?"

"I? Of course not; just a few college affairs," I explained.

"Oh, those don't count. Do you know, just from curiosity, I asked Mary—hope you don't mind—if you had ever been in love with any girl. You seem such a cool, unemotional chap, always."

"And she said—?" I awaited his answer with some eagerness.

"That you had never looked at a girl—the same girl—twice in your life, to her knowledge." And Apthorp laughed loudly. I laughed also. I had to.

"Well," he said, rising, "I must get on. I make it a point to live home whenever I can."

I had known this.

"I say, Anderson, it's common talk, you know, that Mary and I are in love with each other." As Apthorp said this he looked rather better than I had ever seen him.

"The fact," I answered, "is the scandal of our set."

"Don't mention it, will you?" he asked, taking my hand.

"I never spread things that are true," I replied.

"Thanks, old man." As he turned away, he suddenly remembered something. Turning to look

at me, his face aglow with amusement, he said: "Lord, Mary'll have a fit!"

I tapped the bell again.

"Bring me a little whiskey, John." My mind was in a sufficient whirl without the tipples of Gaul.

Clearly, some one of my very good friends had told me what was not the truth. And my only comfort is that I am not, never have been, and never intend to be, engaged at all. I wonder if either of them suspected the truth?

And there's always Fortress Monroë.



THE DREAMER

THE Poet only looks Love in the eyes;
He knows the meaning of the mystic sighs,
The frenzied tears, the dream, the mad desire
That starves upon the lips it satisfies.

O Love, the music of thy vibrant hair!
Thy look is perfume on the amorous air,
Thy breath a veil of light to hide my soul,
Thy touch a dream of rapture drowned in prayer.

O dear fair head between my fevered hands!
O deep, adoring eyes! The very sands
In Time's faint fingers listen at your lips—
Only the Dreamer ever understands!

ELSA BARKER.



THE USUAL BREAKDOWN

DOLLY—Did you enjoy your ride in the auto?

MADGE—It was nice going out, but I didn't like the walk back.



HE SHAVED NO MORE

HE—How do you like the idea of my growing a beard this Summer?

SHE—Why, I should set my face against it.

A PROFANE QUEST

By James Jeffrey Roche

IT was a weary traveler, and he had journeyed far
In quest of the Valhalla where the shades of Heroes are;

For he had breakfasted and dined and supped on old romance,
Until his overheated mind was off its base, perchance.

He longed to see the demigods he'd read about in books;
He wished to hear those ancient gods cry, "Zounds!" and eke, "Gadzooks!"

For these were oaths his eyes had seen, but ears had never heard;
And he was famishing, I ween, for each romantic word.

And so the courteous Me-di-um, to whom he told his case
And paid his fee, said sweetly: "Come, I'll show you to the place."

The Mejum waved his wand on high; the Mejum muttered low;
And there, before the pilgrim's eye, stood good Lord Ivanhoe.

But when the mortal hailed the sprite in words of Walter Scott,
"*Je ne comprends pas*," replied the Knight, "*cette* Anglo-Saxon rot!"

The Mejum sighed. "We've gone too far; let's skip some centuries—
Ho, Central! give us Lochinvar, and Falstaff, if you please."

In Lowland tongue they spake the Scot; his bonnet he did doff,
And, bowing low, he said, "I'm not fameeliar with golf."

And Falstaff laughed, "Young man, you've got the lingo of the stage
Right pat, but if you're wise, you'll trot straight back into your cage."

In vain they summoned heroes bold, from every age and land,
And swore in language quaint and old—not one could understand!

And when they crossed the sea, 'twas worse; the Yankee heroes laughed
At each fantastic-worded curse, and said, "The fellow's daft!"

And loudest laughed old Putnam, he whose brimstone repertoire
Embraced the whole black litany of wicked men who swear.

"Egad! thy mirth offends," I said. "Gadzooks! it irritates!"
"Gadzooks—Gadshell!" said Israel; "Aw, talk United States!"

"Let up on that romantic rot, and hear *me* curse a bit—"
The rest of his remarks are not for publication fit!

MORAL—Let scribes and heroes both of blasphemy beware,
But if they *must* rip out an oath, why, then, sir, let 'em *swear*!

THREE TABLECLOTHS

By Gertrude Lynch

“*C’EST une belle vue, madame.*”
“*Une belle vue.*” She repeated the words of the polite garçon, mechanically.

The hotel perched on the summit of the Sonnenberg had been wisely placed. From its balcony one could see Lucerne, the paradise of the voyager, nestling at the feet of its guardian mountains, the winding stream of the Reuss dividing it into unequal portions. The Lake of the Four Cantons looked by turns translucent as sapphire and opaque as turquoise; then there came a bewildering and indescribable blending of azure tints, inset with silvery sheens, like mirrors. The snowy tip of the Rigi, the frowning slope of grim Pilatus, the heights of the Bernese Oberland, melting from peak to curve and then into the far horizon, lent majesty to a scene that otherwise would have been almost too serene for perfect beauty.

It was an afternoon in early August, and already the west showed presentiments of its coming transfiguration. Down the hillsides strolled the peasants to their toy-like chalets, dotted here and there, which one passed on the drive from the Schweizerhof Quay to the vantage point described. Occasionally an echoing yodel, or the lowing of cattle, would break the silence.

Later, when the gloaming darkened into night, the search-light from Mont Pilatus would illumine the homeward way through the rustic village to the Summer colony about the lake, which, encroaching each year little by little, is driving the native Swiss to his mountain recesses, or absorbing him by the magic touch of gold until he becomes

an indistinguishable unit of the cosmopolitan throng that pours into Lucerne every season, as the melting of the glacier pours its waters into the world-famed lake.

The beauty of the scene was almost painful, like the reproach of a distant melody, like the haunting loveliness of a Madonna’s face seen in some Italian palace yet undesecrated by the mob.

The woman on the balcony closed her eyes to shut it out for a moment, while the nasal accents of the waiter’s voice from the inner room penetrated her consciousness.

“*Oui, oui, monsieur; ze Monte Carlo een ze Vintair and zees place een ze Summaire. Eet ees not often ze people fine ze place, but when zay come ze vonce, zey come ze deux, again an’ again. C’est une belle vue, n’est-ce pas?*”

He followed his words to the balcony with a white cloth over his arm, which he proceeded to arrange on the table at her side. He smoothed it with deft touches and then, firmly catching portions of its snowy surface, made radiating creases, like an outspread fan, from centre to corner.

She had turned away from the contemplation of the landscape and relieved her overstrained sensibilities by watching the homeliness of the domestic act.

Suddenly, as she noted the waiter’s supple fingers, that portion of the brain whose mysteries scientists delight to honor quickened into action. Lucerne and its setting of ice-tipped Alps, the Lake of the Four Cantons, the picturesque suburbs, were blotted

out. To her returned other pictures, the details of which had been unconsciously printed on her mental retina, and which responded now to the magic touch of memory.

She was sitting at a round table in the palm garden of one of New York's fashionable hotels. At one end of the room, shrouded by transplanted verdure, great spreading leaves and tropical blooms, a fountain played, and in the pool a procession of goldfish, like a red scarf or a stream of blood, curved to and fro in undulating motion. From a jutting balcony some Neapolitan singers in green jackets, gold-embroidered, white trousers, red sashes and caps set rakishly, with dusky faces and flashing teeth, twanged an accompaniment to the leader, who sang a boat-song of the Adriatic. The globes in the swinging chandeliers were covered with rose gauze and imbedded in ferns. The waiters, soft-footed, deft-handed, moved from table to table, where sat fashionably dressed women and well-groomed men, laughing, chatting and enjoying the post-theatre supper prepared by one of the most celebrated chefs in the world.

It was the usual evening scene. She had been a part of its make-up many times; but there were reasons why her other visits were lost amid unremembered experiences.

The man opposite her was noticeable, even in this assembly of handsome men. Tall, perfectly dressed, with figure inclined to an embonpoint that was still held in check, with a dignified air and the expression of one who is in perfect accord with his surroundings, the man was, indeed, of striking appearance, and he received glances of admiration from many feminine eyes, looking furtively to avoid their escort's espionage.

The waiter, in her mental vision, smoothed the fine texture of the damask cloth, and then, like the waiter on the balcony, catching a portion in his fingers, deftly ornamented it with tiny creases. Every detail of the scene was

as clear as the landscape at her feet; every motion of the waiter in the palm garden seemed as vivid as those of his Swiss confrère, whose action had recalled the other time and place.

She remembered how her face had hardened as she watched her vis-à-vis reading with satisfaction the items of the menu and, lost to his environment, forestalling, by his expression, the pleasure of the coming feast.

All at once the indecisions of the past few months had crystallized into a rock-bound negation. There were plenty of other women who wished what he represented—the so-called “good things” of life—fine clothes, a handsome establishment, all the luxury of materialism; plenty of women who would exchange their souls. She did not belong among them; he had made a mistake in thinking so and she in permitting the thought. She had drifted for weeks, content with the joy of the moment. He was one of many who paid tribute to her attractions; she had studied his eligibility; she had permitted his attentions, it is true, but the time of probation had ended. She blamed herself for not having been true to her first and finer instincts, for having wasted her time and his. Well, it would be only his vanity that would be touched—a good dinner, a fine cigar, the taste of wine whose vintage was beyond reproach, and she would be forgotten. In three months he would be kneeling at another shrine.

No, it was impossible. To be bought, to be draped, appraised, framed, used as an exhibit of success, never to know the blending of soul with soul, the heart near to the heart of its mate—she could not do it; she would not.

Having given the waiter his order, his eyes followed the lines of her perfectly fitting gown, glanced admiringly at her face, flushed by the fervor of her hidden emotions and the knowledge that she was to have an unpleasant understanding with him before long. His expression was a duplicate of the one with which he had studied the menu. In his eyes she could read

clearly the thought that she did him credit.

After a moment he said, smilingly: "You didn't wear the violets I sent; didn't they suit? They were the best I could get. I paid five dollars for the lot. The man swore they were fresh, just from the country; if he's broken his word, well, he'll lose my custom, and I'll wager it will make considerable difference in his yearly receipts."

She was tempted to utter what was in her mind—all the disillusion; but it was unwise to face unpleasantness at such a time, so she said, indifferently; "I'm tired of violets; everybody wears them, even the shop-girls."

"You're my kind," he said, admiringly, the slight to his flowers failing to penetrate the wall of self-esteem. "When a thing gets common, don't wear it. You're right! Every woman in this place is plastered with them. They're common as dirt. By Jove, you're always right! Next time you shall have orchids, no matter what they cost. I'll warrant the shop-girls don't wear orchids." He laughed.

She was afraid he was going to tell her the price of orchids, and warded off the possible information.

While the supper progressed he told her how a certain speculation had turned out well. "Only cost me a champagne dinner," he confided, genially, "and I got an inside tip. That's the way—spend a little here and there, and you get it back. It's money makes the world go round, you know."

"Is it?" she inquired, absently.

"Is it?" he repeated, jestingly. He was too self-satisfied to be satirical. "Is it? As if a woman as bright as you didn't know! Everybody's got his price; I've got mine; you've got yours."

"Yes?" she assented, with the tone of one who sits at the feet of a teacher.

He remonstrated with the waiter concerning the brown tint of the birds and sent them back to be reboiled. Then he leaned over the table toward her.

"My dear girl, I'll give you a little

advice. Keep your price up; that's the secret of success in this life, for man or woman. Keep it up, and people will come to your way of thinking. The price of an article's often its only value."

She was curling a leaf of romaine over her fork.

"Personally, I adore bargains," she answered. "I loathe things for which I've overpaid."

He laughed, unconscious of any intricate meaning.

"Yes; you're feminine, all right; that's one reason I like you. You're never flaunting your opinions or your views in a fellow's face. I hate that kind of woman—woman's rights and suffrage, and all that. It's a woman's right to be pretty and sweet and well dressed; companionable, you know; that's the only right a woman ought to need."

She thought of the opinion she was soon to flaunt in his face, and was silent.

After a little pause, time enough to excuse the change in conversation, he went on to describe the new suite of rooms he had taken at a smart apartment-house. "Like a prince's, I assure you." Then he told her of the consignment of clothes recently arrived and of his success in evading the duty on them. "Not that I cared for the paltry dollars, you know, but it makes a good story, and one does like to get the best of the government."

He showed her a gem-studded pencil. "It came anonymously," he explained, "but it didn't fool me." His glance held volumes for the curious to read. "She's a widow—a little too dashing for my style. I like something a little less pronounced; something refined." His eyes watched her face. "I've never given her the slightest encouragement, but she's made a play for me; everybody's seen it."

He tried to find the seeds of incipient jealousy in her expression, and succeeded—to his own satisfaction.

"She can't hold a candle to you—you need not be afraid."

"Afraid?" She looked at him with eyes wide open. He had the grace to seem ashamed and took refuge in generalities.

"Oh, you know, women are all alike—all jealous of one another. I don't care how clever they are, they all hate their own sex."

"You have had so much experience," she answered, with a sarcasm he did not grasp; "it would be useless to argue the point."

Smiling at what he considered an adroit compliment, he recounted some incidents of his friends. They were not worth much from the standard of humor or narrative power, but references to yachts, four-in-hands, diamond necklaces and presentations at court punctuated them as insistently as do a boy's commas his first composition.

She listened, bored, appetiteless, with only one desire—to get away, a free woman; no longer to suffer the humiliation of this man's viewpoint—a man with God-given faculties, who had allowed a sky-scraping wall of materialism to grow about him and believed that the rest of the world was gazing at a horizon as narrow as his own; blinded to the fact that there were other sky-lines farther afield—summits, if not distant perspectives. Had he always been as impossible, or was this the culmination of weeks of growing revolt? However that might be, she had awakened from her stupor. The end had come. She saw clearly at last, if at times her vision had been obscured by the demands of the flesh, the insistent temptations of one who loved luxury for the leisure it afforded, for the refinements it brought. Everything commonplace and prosaic hurt her like a blow, but she had gained by experience the conclusion that one can pay too heavily for a heart's desire.

It was while they were sipping some golden chartreuse—which seemed to have gathered in its sunny globules all the perfume of the old

Abbey gardens, all the pungent satire of the hooded brethren, all the inspiration of the cloisters—that a woman passed their table and, colliding with a new-comer, put out her ungloved hand to steady herself. There were some exquisite rings on the woman's fingers and, unconsciously, her eyes, attracted by their brilliancy, held for a second the expression that beauty always evoked, whatever its component elements—the sea-gull's swoop, the face in the crowd, the bit of unspoiled nature, or art's handiwork.

Her vis-à-vis leaned forward. "I'll give you a handsomer one than any she's got on. We'll go to-morrow and pick it out. It'll be the finest in stock, by Jove! A man isn't engaged every day."

He had forced the situation. She turned a little pale, but spoke bravely, with lowered voice. "I appreciate the honor, but it is impossible—impossible."

"Oh, come, now. You know you intend to marry me. What's the use of holding off? Some women have to increase their value that way, but you don't need to."

He waited for her yielding, toying with his coffee-spoon.

"You're the only woman I ever wanted to marry—that I've ever asked to marry me. I've had my little affairs, of course—who hasn't?—and some big ones, too; but I've never been caught. I've always fought shy at the last moment."

She gasped, half-audibly. Was it possible she had ever thought seriously of marrying this man?

She bent toward him. "I'm sorry you make me speak here and now, but perhaps it is just as well. I can't marry you. I don't love you. Don't urge me; it won't do a particle of good. I'm sorry if you've misunderstood before, but you must not misunderstand any longer."

There was an expression in her face that suggested the ultimate. He spoke only once or twice after that. "I never tried so hard to please a wo-

man—never. Most of them aren't hard to win. I have never pleased you, I know. You've always acted bored and indifferent, and kept me at arm's length. I thought it was just your way. I see now it isn't. You'd be different with a different fellow."

At parting he faced her, scarlet with humiliation, his lips trembling perceptibly, in his eyes the look of hurt vanity wounded to the core, his whole attitude that of the man who has met his first serious set-back, and who is unable to treat the situation with dignity.

His last words were: "I know I'm not a millionaire, my dear girl, but I will be some day. You wait and see. You've made a mistake."

So he passed out of her life.

It had taken her but a moment to recall that dinner, only the moment that the Swiss waiter took to place the heavy silver on the table, the thick-crusted bread, the curl of unsalted butter like a wilted maple leaf, and to smooth and crease anew the snowy cloth; only the moment that the west took to flame into a bewildering mass of color, while the Lake of the Four Cantons changed from blue to rainbow tints, while the Alps glistened with all those bewildering hues for which the language has no name. Only a moment; then memory, trickster still, threw a new scene on the canvas.

It was two years later. The time was early night, and already the street-lamps were beginning to gleam, like the gems in a necklace whose links are hid. Tall, forbidding, the gloomy façade of the Brooks House rose in the gathering shadows.

She had dismissed her cab at the corner, and now, at the crucial moment, hesitated before ascending the steps. Had she done wisely to come? Would she be able to treat this situation, as she had treated others in her life, with just the right amount of curiosity, interest and friendly sympathy?

His letter had been the impelling force. It had opened abruptly:

. . . I do not believe you are married; you are not the sort of woman who is married early or easily. Do you remember the last dinner we had together and my words, at parting, that I would be a millionaire? Well, I am ruined—dead broke. . . . I am living at the Brooks House; you know it by reputation, of course. You can get a good dinner here for fifteen cents. Will you come and eat one with me? . . . I will meet you at the entrance at six to-morrow evening, should you decide to come. I cannot call for you, as I have no dress-coat and you would be disgraced forever. I remember you were always a little particular about your admirers' coats. Don't answer this, please. I couldn't stand a conventional note of regret or sympathy; the walls are too cold and bare to permit one to read that style of correspondence philosophically, although it is prevalent here. . . . It might be an interesting experience. You must be bored by continued sunshine, and even a shadow has its mission.

There was a reckless tone in the letter, but she liked it better than anything that had come into her life since they parted.

During all the months when he had paid devoted attention to her, she had never felt the anticipatory thrill of meeting; after their parting, she remembered him with less and less distinctness. He had not impressed her deeply. The pleasure and pain of his companionship had been too exactly balanced; every agreeable memory had its reverse side, every positive point its negative resistance.

From the moment of the receipt of his letter, till they touched hands, he was scarcely out of her thoughts. What developing force, she asked again and again, had been at work? Whom was she going to meet—a stranger, or the man she had once known, who would add to his list of shortcomings that of a reckless bravado, pushed to the limits of good taste?

The fever of exploration is in every heart; for some are hid the waste places of the earth, for others the inner mazes of the human soul. Like the traveler who approaches the confines of a strange country, she knew that

there was facing her the unusual and unexpected.

He was standing a little way from the door. He was pale and thin, and his clothes, made for better days, hung loosely about his wasted frame. He raised his hand to his mustache and stroked it when he saw her—how well she remembered the familiar gesture!—and, through the intervening space, she could see his hand tremble.

She had determined to steer her bark in the safe shallows of common-placeness, but her resolve suddenly melted away. She felt herself whirled along in the current of human intensity. This was not the moment for the airy persiflage of society; with the closing of the outer door she had barred the superficial and unmeaning.

He held her hand longer than convention required, while he said, slowly: "So you came! I didn't know. After I wrote I was fearful you would, and equally fearful you would not."

She answered irrelevantly: "You have been ill—very ill."

"Oh, it isn't all illness that's pulled me down. I used to think I worked in the old days; but I didn't know what work was."

"I am sorry." Her sentence trailed limply from her lips, and she felt it ineffective; but he accepted its sympathy with visible gratitude.

Her presence seemed to have acted like a tonic, and he held himself erect. There had been a swagger uprightness in the old days. This was different. This was like the attitude of a child who has at length mastered the art of walking, after many struggling preliminaries.

They sauntered slowly to the dining-hall. There was a table reserved for women. She was its only feminine occupant save a thin, pale-faced girl, who sat at the farther end and looked at her deprecatingly, the while crumbling bread.

The waiter, too, noticed in her something different from the day-by-day habitués and, desirous of showing that he, also, had seen better times, brushed an imaginary crumb from the

coarse cloth, and, catching its mesh between thumb and finger, creased it in various inexpressive radiations. His action recalled the elaborate attentions of the waiter at their last dinner together. She withdrew herself from that reminiscence to listen to his words.

"Don't think I wrote that note and asked you to come here in order to appeal to your sympathies. It looks like it, I know, for I'm pretty much of a wreck. No; I wanted you to see that I appreciate you—at last. I didn't know of any better way to tell you that than to ask you to come here and find me stripped of all the externals which I used to think were all there was in life. I can't give you a good dinner and flowers, and entertain you—Jove, how you were entertained!—with a description of my glories, but—" he paused a long time, while he buttered his bread reflectively—"I'm more of a man now than I was then—than I have ever been."

She lowered her eyes; she felt their mistiness and was afraid he might see it.

The waiter placed her soup-plate and hurried away, after spilling a part of its contents. There were lumps of meat floating aimlessly about in a watery fluid, but she was faint from hunger and dipped her spoon in it with zeal. She had anticipated the physical repulsion that might assail her, and had not eaten since breakfast.

It would have been easy to deceive him in the old times, so blinded was he to all but his narrow viewpoint, bounded on its four sides by vanities. It was not easy now, for misfortune had done the work relegated to it in the scheme of universal progress, and in this man, seemingly imbedded in materialism as a gem in its matrix, there had been an intellectual, as well as a spiritual, uplifting.

"It was the old Romans, wasn't it," she asked, lightly, "who prepared for their feasts of nightingales' tongues and peacocks' hearts by fasting?"

The hot blood coursed through his cheeks.

"Don't—you mustn't!" he exclaimed. "It isn't so long ago that the thought of a dinner here would have nauseated me. Thank heaven for my experiences! I can truthfully say it. I needed every one of them, and the blows haven't been light ones, I can assure you. After one has lived for days by means of itinerant coffee-stands, one forgets to be fastidious. Try it some time when you've indignation from canapé Lorenzo and nesselrode."

They ate their roast beef, boiled potatoes and canned corn, amid an exchange of experiences and reminiscences.

She had found him stolid in the old days, even in his best moments. She had been conscious then of constantly drawing the veil of silence before her best thoughts, knowing that he would be unappreciative, even if he understood her. She felt now that their positions were reversed, as if he might say something she would be unable to comprehend. He had even attained the last touch of mentality, the keen sense of humor, which a king may envy a beggar.

"What a cad I must have seemed to you before!" he said, once. "There's a fellow comes here occasionally, clad in broadcloth and fine linen. He actually eats the dinners, or parts of them. He reminds me of myself when I was prosperous."

"It's a good dinner," she said, half resentfully.

"Well, you must have been hungry." They laughed in unison. The men at the opposite table looked at them curiously; it was seldom that sound was heard.

"Tell me about him," she asked, as she ate the rice pudding.

"Oh, he talks about his fine house, his corps of servants and his yacht. One has to go through the waters of affliction before one learns that it isn't what a man has that counts, but what he is."

There were no finger-bowls, scented with almond, decorated with floating rose-leaves. She did not deplore

their absence. She had but one regret, that the dinner was over; that she had no further excuse to linger; that she had come to the parting of their ways; for she felt, with the intuition of her sex, that he had asked her there for a purpose and the purpose had been accomplished.

He broke into her thought. "This is my last dinner here forever, I hope. To-night will be the one pleasant memory I shall take into the strenuous life I am facing. I have paid all my debts. I am a free man."

He drew a letter from his pocket and held it up. "My opportunity! It has come in the nick of time, and I'm not a fool—now." His lips were firmly set and there were tense lines about his mouth. "A man who knows himself to the core knows that there isn't such a thing as defeat. I shall fight as long as there's breath in me, and—I shall win."

He spoke without bravado. It was the attitude of the man before battle, who recognizes only the alternatives of victory or death.

Her tone echoed his conviction and expressed her own. "I believe you will," she said.

He placed her in the cab that she had ordered to be at the corner. She tried to say something, falteringly, but he stopped her. "Don't; I can't stand conventionalities or indifference. I've been hurt too much for that."

"I don't have to be conventional or indifferent," she demurred.

"No, but—" he took both her hands and held them in his—"I've appealed to your sympathies, I know. It wasn't manly. If you said anything, you might say what you would regret to-morrow, when you came to think it over. It's so easy for a woman to do that. She thinks she means all she says, and she does at the time, but she wakes up to the knowledge afterward that emotions are bad guides."

She was silent. What he said was true. How would she feel when the

morrow dawned, away from the magnetism of this man, whose influence seemed to be penetrating her life?

He went on: "You have told me there is no one in your heart, and I thank you for the confidence; but he may come—before I return. If he does—" his voice broke a little—"if he does, there will be one fervent prayer for your happiness, a prayer without a single selfish thought. If he doesn't—well, a man who can't make a home to offer a woman with a capital of health, hope and experience isn't much of a man, is he?"

He did not wait for an answer, but, dropping from the carriage step, was lost to her sight.

Down the mountain slopes floated the lingering cadences of the Swiss

yodel. She had heard it in the ice-cave at Grindelwald, from the Mauvais Pas at Chamonix, near the falls at Martigny. It had accompanied her happiness, in these halcyon days of her honeymoon, as the *motif* of an opera-score appears and disappears.

"*Madame est servie*," said the polite garçon, bowing to his waist.

Through the French window stepped a tall, erect figure.

"I have been watching you a long time from the room. Of what were you thinking so deeply, wife?"

She arose, shook her draperies a little and moved gracefully to the table, saying, with a laugh over her shoulder:

"Of some other feasts we've had together, dear. I hope this will be as good."



A UNIVERSAL LANGUAGE

L-O-V-E, the alphabet;
And sighs, the punctuation;
Possessive pronouns mainly used,
In form of exclamation;
The persons, two—and quite enough,
Sufficient for all functions;
The sounds, the purest labials;
And kisses, the conjunctions.

EDWIN L. SABIN.



WELL MATCHED

WOLLY—Your vacation is rather short, isn't it?

WHIMMER—I guess it will be long enough for me. I'm rather short myself.



A GOOD INVESTMENT

BRAMBLE—What would you do if you had a million dollars?

THORNE—I'd hire a private secretary to answer fool questions.

NO TRANSIENT GUEST

By John Winwood

THE Man fingered the violets in his buttonhole and smiled and sighed; then, as he caught sight of the small figure on the other side of the hearth, he started.

"Upon my word!" he said. "I thought I was quite alone. Where did you come from?"

"Don't pretend you didn't expect me," said the Boy. "The door was wide open; that is, it was only held by a prejudice and a habit or two—practically the same thing."

"You seem to be very sure of yourself," said the Man, "and certainly your face is a bit familiar. But I am quite sure that I have never before had the pleasure of seeing you. Would you mind telling me your name?"

The Boy tip-toed to his side and whispered softly in his ear.

"No!" cried the Man. "Is it possible? They always said you would come some day, but I gave up expecting you long ago. May I ask what brought you here now?"

"Is *she*," the Boy inquired, suddenly, "the most gloriously beautiful woman you ever imagined could exist?"

"Well—no," the Man admitted, grudgingly.

"Has she the most exquisite grace, the keenest wit, the whitest hand, the softest hair you have ever known?"

"Well—er—not exactly," said the Man.

"Then," said the Boy, "why are you always striving to be constantly near her? Why do you dream of her by night and think of her by day?"

"Really, I—I don't know," said the Man, stupidly.

The Boy laughed. "Well, if you

can't explain a little thing like that," he said, "how in the world do you expect me to account for my being here? You must simply take me for granted."

The Man looked at him, curiously. "Though we meet for the first time," he said, "your face is strangely familiar. Surely, I have seen some one you remind me of."

The Boy grinned. "Two Summers ago at Bar Harbor?" he inquired.

The Man blushed. "Bah! Mere infatuation," he cried.

"Certainly," said the Boy; "we are often taken for each other; simply a family resemblance."

The Man looked about him, doubtfully. "I don't wish to be rude," he said, "but now that you are here, may I ask, have you any idea how long you intend to stay?"

"Indefinitely," said the Boy. "I am not the transient guest others of my family are."

"I don't know where you're going to sleep," grumbled the Man.

"I never sleep," said the Boy. "I am troubled with insomnia."

"Then you'll probably keep me awake, too," complained the Man.

"Undoubtedly," assented the Boy, cheerfully.

"I imagine you're going to be a bit of a nuisance," said the Man. "Now, see here; let us come to an understanding. You're not bad company for a quiet evening like this, say; but I can't have you running about my office and mixing up the books and fooling with the ticker. I haven't time for you there, understand."

The Boy laughed, wickedly. "Make me stay home, if you can," he said. "Oh, I'll be bothersome now and again;

for instance, why don't you go to that little supper down-town to-night? They're expecting you; it's after twelve."

"I trust I know the courtesy due a guest," said the Man, stiffly. "I can't leave you here alone, can I?"

"Why not take me with you?" said the Boy.

The Man winced. "Lord, no!" he cried.

"I'm afraid I'll keep you at home a great deal," said the Boy, politely.

"I dare say," said the Man, gloomily.

He paced the room thoughtfully a moment, frowning; then he turned to the Boy. "I'm going to be quite frank," he said, "and, perhaps, discourteous; but, as you yourself said, you were neither invited nor expected."

"The door was open," said the Boy.

"That has nothing to do with it," said the Man; "a mere chance. And I feel I must, I simply must ask you to go. I really haven't room for you, or time for you, and I've made no preparations for you. If you come back later, say in a year or so——"

"You really wish me to go?" asked the Boy, doubtfully.

The Man looked at his watch. "I'm late for my engagement as it is," he said.

The Boy rose and made a step toward the door. "You'll miss me when you come back," he whispered.

"Possibly," said the Man.

"The room will be empty when I go—you know it was before I came," said the Boy.

"One can always have friends," said the Man.

"I am the only one who never becomes a bore," said the Boy, "and in the evenings when you come from the club, it'll be lonesome here by the fire, and when you are walking by the sea on a blue afternoon, say, or watching the moon rise——"

"I have done all those things without you," said the Man, undecidedly.

"Ah, you had never known me then!" said the Boy. "There will be a difference now."

He reached the threshold and looked at the Man wistfully, over his shoulder. "I can never come again, you know," he said.

"Oh, I say," said the Man, uneasily, "don't go like that. Come back just a minute."

"It's eternity or nothing," said the Boy, brokenly. His eyes were like blue pansies in a May rain. "Good-bye," he said, hopelessly. "You must always remember you sent me away yourself."

"I'm damned if I have!" cried the Man, suddenly. He shot out a long arm to the Boy's shoulder. "Here, come back, come back, do you hear? you miserable, adorable little nuisance! Upon my word I can't let you go, after all. Come here!"

He sank into the big chair before the fire and drew the Boy closely into the curve of his arm.

"There, little chap, cheer up," he said. "Let's be cozy. What do you think of—er—her eyes, eh?"



ALMS

AS to the mosque old Time, the sultan, passed
Between the beggar months around the gate,
He in October's lap superbly cast
His golden largess and went in, elate.

THOMAS WALSH.



"HOW is your apiary?"
"Humming!"

AN INCARNATION OF HELEN

By James Branch Cabell

"And memories of distant homes and wives."

"WHICH," murmured Townsend, "is an uncommonly good line." He chewed the end of his pencil, meditatively. "From present indications," said he, "that Russian countess is cooking something on her chafing-dish again. It usually affects them that way about dawn."

He began on the next verse viciously, and came a cropper over the clash of two sibilants as the distant clamor increased. "Brutes!" said he, disapprovingly. "Sere, clear, dear—Now they've finished, '*Jamais, monsieur*,' and begun crying, 'Fire!' Mere, near— By Jove! I do smell smoke!"

Wrapping his dressing-gown about him—he had afterward reason to thank the kindly fates that it was the green one with the white fleurs-de-lis, and not the wonted unspeakably disreputable bath-robe, scorched in various and unexpected places by the pipe-ashes of many years—Townsend went to the door and peered out into the empty hotel corridor. The incandescent lights glimmered mildly through a gray haze that was acrid and choking to breathe; little puffs of smoke crept lazily out of the lift-shaft just opposite; down-stairs all Breslau was shouting, "*Feuer!*" and dragging about the heavier and less valuable pieces of hotel furniture.

"By Jove!" said Townsend, and whistled disconsolately as he looked downward through the bars about the lift-shaft.

"Do you think," spoke a voice—a deep contralto voice—"that we are in—in any danger?"

The owner of the voice was very tall, and not even the agitation of the moment prevented Townsend's observing that her eyes were on a level with his own. They were not unpleasant eyes, and a stray dream or two yet lingered under their fringed lids. The owner of the voice wore a strange garment that was fluffy and pink—pale pink, like the lining of a sea-shell—and billows of white and the ends of various blue ribbons peeped out at the neck. Townsend made a mental note of the fact that disordered hair is not necessarily unbecoming; it sometimes has the effect of an unusually heavy halo set about the face of a half-awakened angel.

"It would appear," said he, meditatively, "that, in consideration of our being on the fifth floor, with the lift-shaft drawing splendidly, and the stairs winding about it—except the two lower flights, which have just fallen in—and in consideration of the fire department's recognized incompetence to extinguish anything more formidable than a tar-barrel—yes, it would appear, I think, that we might go farther than 'dangerous' and find a less appropriate adjective to describe the situation."

"You—you mean we can't get down?" The beautiful voice was tremulous.

Townsend's silence made conclusive reply.

"Well, then," she suggested, cheerfully, after due reflection, "since we can't go down, why not go up?"

As a matter of fact, nothing could be more simple. They were on the top floor of the hotel, and beside them, in the niche corresponding to the

stairs below, was an iron ladder that led to a neatly whitewashed trap-door in the roof. Adopting her suggestion, Townsend pushed against this and found that it yielded readily; then, standing at the top of the ladder, he looked about him on a dim expanse of tiles and chimneys; yet farther off were the peaked roofs and gables of Breslau; and above him brooded a clean sky and the naked glory of the moon. He lowered his head with a sigh of relief.

"I say," he called, cheerily, "it's much nicer up here—superb view of the city, and within a minute's drop of the square! Better come up."

"Go first," said she; and subsequently Townsend held for a moment a very slender hand—a ridiculously small hand for a woman whose eyes were on a level with his own—and the two stood together on the roof of the Hôtel Continental. They had, as Townsend had affirmed, an unobstructed view of Breslau and of its square, where two toy-like engines puffed viciously and threw impotent threads of water against the burning hotel and on the heads of an excited and erratically clad throng.

Townsend looked moodily down. "That's the café," said he, sulkily, as a series of small explosions popped like pistol shots. "Oh, Lord! there goes the only decent Scotch in all Breslau!"

"There's mamma!" she cried, excitedly; "there!" She pointed to a stout woman, who, with a purple shawl wrapped about her head, was wringing her hands as heartily as a birdcage held in one of them would permit. "And—and she's saved Jackie!"

"In that case," said Townsend, "I suppose it's clearly my duty to rescue the remaining member of the family. You see," he continued, bending over the trap-door and tugging at the ladder, "this thing is only about twenty feet long, but the kitchen wing of the hotel is a little less than that from the rear of the house behind it, and with this as a bridge I

think we might make it. At any rate, the roof will be done for in a half-hour, and it's worth trying." He drew the ladder up slowly. "You'll have to help," said he. "Think you're up to carrying your end?"

"My muscles—!" she began, indignantly; then she put aside the subject with a flush, and lifted one end of the ladder with ostentatious ease. They carried it between them down the gentle slant of the roof, through a maze of ghostly chimneys and dim skylights, to the kitchen wing, which was a few feet lower than the main body of the building. Townsend skirted a chimney and stepped lightly over the eaves, calling, "Now, then!" when a little cry, followed by a crash in the yard beneath, shook his heart into his mouth. He turned gasping, and found the girl lying safe but terrified, on the verge of the roof.

"It—it was a bucket," she sobbed, "and I stumbled over it—and it fell—and—and I nearly did—and I'm so frightened!"

"Little girl! little girl!" cried he. Somehow he was holding her hand in his and his mouth was making foolish sounds and he was trembling in every limb. "It—it was close; but—but, look here, you must pull yourself together!" he pleaded, piteously.

"I can't," she cried, hysterically. "Oh, I'm so frightened! I can't!"

"You see," said Townsend, with careful patience, "we must go on—*must*, do you understand?" He waved his hand toward the east, helplessly. "Look!" said he, as a thin tongue of flame leaped through the open trap-door and flickered wickedly for a moment against the darkness.

She saw and shuddered. "I'll come," she murmured, listlessly, and rose to her feet.

Townsend heaved a sigh of relief, and, waving her aside from the ladder, dragged it after him to the eaves of the rear wing. As he had foreseen, it reached easily to the eaves of the house behind it, which was fortunately of the same height, and formed a passable,

though unsubstantial-looking, bridge. He regarded it disapprovingly.

"It will only bear one," said he; "and—and we'll have to crawl over separately. Are you up to it?"

"Please go first," said she, very quietly. And Townsend, after gazing into her face for a moment, crept over gingerly, not caring to look down into the abyss beneath.

Then he spent an apparent century in silent impotence, watching a fluffy, pink figure that swayed over a bottomless space and moved forward a hair's breadth each year. He made no sound during this interval. In fact, he did not subsequently remember drawing a really satisfactory breath from the time he left the hotel roof, until he lifted a soft, faint-scented, panting bundle to the roof of the Councillor von Hellwig.

"You are," he cried, with conviction, "the bravest, the most—er—the bravest woman I ever knew!" He heaved a little sigh of content. "I wonder," said Townsend, in his soul, "if you have any idea what a beauty you are! what a wonderful, unspeakable beauty you are! You are everything that men ever dreamed of in dreams that left them weeping for sheer happiness—and more! You are—you are *you*, and I have held you in my arms for a moment; and, before high heaven, to do that again I'd burn countless cities!" But aloud he only said, "We're quite safe now, you know."

She laughed, bewilderingly. "I suppose," said she, "the next thing is to find a trap-door."

But there were, so far as they could find, no trap-doors in the roof of the Councillor von Hellwig, or in the neighboring roofs; and, after searching three of them carefully, Townsend, apologetic but not ill-pleased, suggested the propriety of waiting till dawn to be rescued.

"You see," he pointed out, "everybody's at the fire over yonder. But we're quite safe, I should say, with the whole block of houses to walk on; and we have cheerful company, eligible

central location in the heart of the city, and the superb spectacle of a big fire at exactly the proper distance. Therefore," he continued, severely, "you will instantly have the kindness to explain exactly what your motives were in wandering about the corridors of a burning hotel at four o'clock in the morning."

She sat down against a chimney and wrapped her gown about her. "I sleep very soundly," said she, meekly, "and the cries awakened me—and I suppose mamma lost her head."

"And left you," thought Townsend, "left you—to save a canary bird! Good Lord!"

"And you?" she asked.

"Oh—oh, yes, me!" He awoke sharply from wondering how she would disentangle her lashes when she looked up; it seemed impossible without assistance. "I was writing—and I thought that Russian woman had a few friends to supper—and I was looking for a rhyme when I found you," he concluded, incoherently.

She looked up. It was incredible, but the lashes disentangled quite easily. Townsend was seized with a strong desire to see her perform this interesting feat again. "Verses?" said she, considering his slippers in a new light.

"Yes," he admitted, guiltily, "of Helen."

She echoed the name. It is an unusually beautiful name when properly spoken.

"Late of Troy town," said he, in explanation.

"Oh!" The lashes fell into their former state. It was hopeless this time; help would be required, inevitably. "I should think," said she, judicially, "that—that live women would be more—inspiring."

"Surely," assented Townsend. He drew his gown about him and sat down. "But, you see, she is alive—to me." He dwelt lingeringly on the last words.

"One would gather," said she, meditatively, "that you have an unrequited attachment for Helen of Troy."

A sudden idea came to Townsend, and he sighed a melancholy assent. The great eyes opened to their utmost extent. The effect was that of a ship firing a broadside at you. "Tell me all about it," said she, coaxingly.

"I have always loved her," said Townsend, with gravity. "Long ago, when I was a little chap, I had a book, 'Stories of the Trojan War,' or something of the sort. And there I first read of Helen—and remembered. There were pictures—outline pictures—of phenomenally straight-nosed warriors, with flat draperies which demonstrated that the laws of gravity were not yet discovered; pictures of slender goddesses, who had done their hair up carefully and gone no further in their dressing; all sorts of pictures—and Helen's was the most manifestly impossible of them all. But I knew—I knew of her beauty, that wonderful beauty which made men's hearts as water and drew the bearded kings to Ilium to die for her, having put away all memories of distant homes and wives; that flawless beauty which buoyed the Trojans through ten years of fighting and starvation, just with pure delight in gazing upon it day by day, and with the joy of seeing her going about their streets. For I remembered!" He sighed effectively, as he ended.

"I know," said she, softly.

"Or ever the knightly years had gone
With the old world to the grave,
I was a king in Babylon
And you were a Christian slave."

"Yes; only, I was the slave, I think, and you—er—I mean, there goes the roof, and it's an uncommonly good thing you thought of the trap-door. Good thing the wind's veering, too. By Jove! look at those flames!" he cried, as the main body of the Continental toppled inward like a house of cards; "they're splashing, actually splashing, like waves over a break-water!" He drew a deep breath and turned from the conflagration, only to catch its leaping reflection in her eyes. "I was a Trojan warrior," he resumed, simply, "one of the

many unknown men who sought and found death beside Scamander, trodden down by Achilles or Diomedes, and died knowing they fought in a bad cause, but all wrapt in a mad, wild joy, remembering the desire o' the world and her perfect loveliness. She scarce knew that I existed; but I had loved her; I had caught some scant laughing words from her in passing and I treasured them as men treasure gold; or she had spoken, perhaps—oh, day of days!—to me, in a low, courteous voice that came straight from the back of the throat and blundered deliciously over the harshness of our alien speech. I remembered—even as a boy, I remembered."

She cast back her head and laughed, merrily. "I—I think," said she, "you are the most amusing madman I ever encountered."

"No," murmured Townsend; "she never dies. She is the spirit of beauty that never dies, but ever draws men onward through the world with visions of the heart's desire. She is to each man the one woman that he may love perfectly; and to no two is her face the same. She is sister to the old centuries; but she never dies. Her soul has known many fleshly coverings; and through countless ages I have followed her and fought for her and won her and lost her, but always loving her as all men must do. And some day—" His voice died into a whisper that was partly due to emotion and partly to an inability to finish the sentence satisfactorily. The logic of his verses, when thus hastily paraphrased, seemed vague.

"You hope to meet her in this matter-of-fact day?"

"Why not?" His voice was earnest. "She always comes. Is it madness?" Townsend spread out his hands in a helpless little gesture. "I do not know. But she will come."

"You will know her?" she queried, softly.

Townsend had reached firm ground at last. "She will be very tall," said

he, "like a young birch tree when its leaves whisper over to one another the songs of Spring in the heart of the woods. Her hair will be a miser's dream of gold; and it will hang heavily about a face that will be—will be quite indescribable, just as the dawn yonder is past the utmost preciousness of speech; but it will flush tenderly, like the first anemone of Spring peeping coyly through the black, good-smelling earth; and her eyes will be deep, shaded wells where truth lurks. When men talk to her as they cannot but talk to her, her face will flush dull red, like smouldering wood; and she will smile a little, and look out over a great fire such as that she saw on the night when Ilium was sacked and the slain bodies were soft under her feet as she fled through flaming Troy Town. And then—then I shall know her."

His companion sighed, wearily; the woes of centuries weighed down her eyelids for a moment. "It is bad enough," she lamented, "to have lost all one's wardrobe—that blue organdie was a dream and I had never worn it—but to find one's self—in a dressing-gown—at daybreak—on a strange roof—with a strange madman—it is terrible!"

Townsend rose to his feet and waved his hand toward the east. The dawn was breaking in angry scarlet and gold that spread like fire over half the visible horizon; the burning hotel shut out the remaining half with tall flames that shouldered one another monotonously and seemed dull and faded against the pure radiance of the sky. Chill daylight showed in melting patches through the clouds of black smoke overhead. It was a world of fire, transfigured by the austere magnificence of dawn and the grim splendor of the shifting, roaring conflagration; and at their feet lay the orchard of the Councillor von Hellwig, and the awakened birds piped querulously, and the sparks fell crackling among the apple-blossoms.

"Ilium!" he cried.

She inspected the scene, critically. "It does look like Ilium," she admitted. "And that," peering over the eaves into the deserted by-street, "that looks like the milkman."

Townsend was unable to deny this, though an angry idea crossed his mind that any milkman with proper tastes and feelings would at this moment be gaping at the fire at the other end of the block, rather than prosaically measuring quarts at the side-entrance just below. But there was no help for it, when chance thus unblushingly favored the proprieties, and he clung to a water-pipe and explained the situation with a vexed mind and doubtful German.

He turned to his companion. She was regarding the burning hotel with a curiously impersonal expression.

"Now, I'd give a good deal," thought Townsend, "to know just how long you'd like that milkman to take in coming back."

II

"Do you know," said Townsend, subsequently—it was a little more than five years later—"that I didn't quite catch your name?"

She took a liberal supply of lemon juice. "The oysters," she murmured, "are delicious."

Townsend noted with approval that her gown was pink and fluffy; it had also the advantage of displaying shoulders that were incredibly white and a throat that was little short of marvelous. "I am glad," he whispered, confidentially, "that you are still wearing that faint vein about your temple; I approve of it." She raised her eyebrows slightly and selected a biscuit. "You see," said Townsend, "I was horribly late. And when Lady Pevensey said, 'Allow me,' and I saw—well, I didn't care," he concluded, lucidly.

"How curious!" she confided to a spoonful of *consommé à la Julienne*.

"After five years!" sighed Town-

send, happily. But he continued, with unutterable reproach, "To go without a word—that very day——"

"Mamma—" she began.

Townsend recalled the canary-bird and groaned. "I sought wildly," said he; "you were flown. The *propriétaire* was tearing his hair—no insurance—he knew nothing. I tore my hair, metaphorically; I said things. There was a row. He, too, said things: 'Figure to yourselves, *messieurs*! I lose the Continental—two ladies come and go, I know not who—I am ruined, desolated, is it not?—and this pig of an Englishman blusters—ah, my new carpets, just down, what horror! Ah, perfidious Albion!'—Yes," concluded Townsend, into the Duchess of Drummington's ear-trumpet; "only in town for a few days."

There was an interval and an *entrée*.

"And so——?"

"And so I knocked about the world in various places, hoping against hope that at last——"

"Your voice carries frightfully."

Townsend glanced toward her grace of Drummington, who, as a dining dowager of many years' experience, was engrossed in the contents of her plate. "She's as hard of hearing as a telephone-girl; and your neighbor—his neighbor is Lady Allonby. We might as well be on a desert island, desire o' the world." The term slipped out so carelessly as to appear almost accidental.

"Sir!" said she, with proper indignation; "after so short an acquaintance——"

"Centuries," he suggested, meekly.

She frowned—an untrustworthy frown that was tinged with laughter. "One meets so many people! Yes, it is frightfully warm, Colonel Grimshaw; they really ought to open some of the windows."

"Er—haw—hum! Didn't see you at the Anchesters'."

"No; I am usually lucky enough to be in bed with a sick headache when Mrs. Anchester entertains. Of two

evils one should choose the lesser, you know."

"Er—haw—hum!" Colonel Grimshaw retired with a reassuring air of having done his duty, once and for all.

"I never," she suggested, tentatively, "heard any more of your poem about—about——"

"Oh, I finished it; every magazine in England knows it. It's poor stuff," sighed Townsend, "but how could I write of Helen when Helen had disappeared?"

The lashes tangled. "I looked her up," confessed their owner, guiltily, "in the encyclopedia. It was very instructive—about sun-myths and bronzes and the growth of the epic, you know. Of course"—there was a flush and a hiatus—"it is nonsense."

"Nonsense?" His voice sank tenderly. "Is it nonsense that for five years I have remembered a woman whose soft body I held—for a moment—in my arms? nonsense that I have fought all this time against—against the temptations every man has—that I might ask her at last—some day when she would come, as I knew she would—to share a fairly clean life? nonsense that I have dreamed, waking and sleeping, of a wondrous face I knew in Ilium—in old Rome—in France when the Valois were kings—a face whose least feature is stamped on my heart unalterably, which floated before me in the dusk of the Canada woods, and beckoned through the haze of the white African sands where we potted the Boers and the Boers potted us? Nonsense? Well," sighed Townsend, vainly racking his brain for a fragment of the five-year-old rhyme, "I suppose it is!"

"The salt, please," quoth she. Then, after a pause: "Canada?"

"Big moose," said he.

"Africa?"

Townsend flushed guiltily. "The V. C.," he admitted.

She flashed a broadside at him. "Oh! Then you——?"

"Dear me, yes!" said Townsend—to the ear-trumpet; "domesticity came in with ping-pong. Divorces are going

out, you know, and *divorcées* aren't allowed to. Quite modish women are seen in public with their husbands nowadays."

"Heavens!" lamented her grace of Drummington. "What a disagreeable fad!"

Townsend ate his portion of duck abstractedly. "Do you know—I wish——"

"Yes?"

"I hardly dare ask——"

"If I were the traditional fairy," said she, meditatively, "I could not, of course, refuse a—a hero. You should have the usual three wishes."

"Two," he declared, "would be sufficient."

"First?"

"That you tell me your name."

"I adore orange ices. Second?"

"That you let me measure your finger—any finger—say the third on the left hand."

"Absurd!" said she, decisively. "You really talk to me as if—" This non-existent state of affairs proved indescribable, the unreal condition lapsing into a pout.

"Possibly," he conceded, with caution; "the way in which a man talks to a woman—to the woman—depends largely upon the depth of——"

"The depth of his devotion?" she queried, helpfully. "Of course!"

Townsend faced the broadside bravely. "No," said he, critically; "the depth of her dimples."

"Nonsense!" Nevertheless the dimples deepened.

He bent forward; there was a little catch in his voice. "You must know that I love you," he said, simply. "I have always loved you, I think, since the moment my eyes first fell on you in that—that other pink thing. Of course, I realize the absurdity of my talking in this way to a woman whose name even I don't know; but I realize more strongly that I love you. Why, there isn't a pulse in my body that isn't throbbing and tingling and beating contentedly just from pure joy of being with you, desire o' the world! And, in time, you will love me a little,

simply because I want you to—isn't that always a woman's main reason for caring for a man?" She considered this dubious and flushed. "I won't insist," said Townsend, with a hurried, contented little laugh, "that you were formerly an Argive queen, if you don't like. That was a paraphrase of my verses, I confess—but—but Helen has always been to me the symbol of perfect loveliness, and it was not unnatural that I should identify you with her."

"Thank you, sir," said she, demurely.

"I half-believe it is true even now; and if not—well, Helen was well enough in her day, desire o' the world, but I have seen you and loved you, and Helen is forgot. It isn't exactly the orthodox way of falling in love," he added, with cheerful candor; "but—but it's very real to me."

"You—you couldn't have fallen in love, really," said she, unconvincingly.

"It was not in the least difficult," he protested.

"You don't even know my name."

Townsend laughed easily. "I know what it's going to be," said he, with conviction.

"No!" Common courtesy naturally demanded that this should not be spoken with undue harshness. "Never, under any conceivable circumstances!" Courtesy, perhaps, prompted the little sigh, which Townsend noted with approval.

"And after dinner—in an hour?"

"In the Winter Garden," she conceded; "I—I might decline you, with thanks."

"Rejection not implying any lack of merit," quoth Townsend, grimly. "Thanks; I'm accustomed to it."

Lady Pevensey was gathering eyes around the table, and her guests rose with the usual outburst of conversation and swishing of dresses and dropping of handkerchiefs and fans. The Duchess of Drummington bore down upon them, a determined and generously proportioned figure in black silk.

"Really," said she, aggressively, "I never saw two people more engrossed.

My dear Mrs. Barry-Smith, you've been so taken up with Bob Townsend, I haven't had a chance to ask after your dear husband, or get in a word. It's scandalous! Why isn't he here?"

"Dear Lady Drummington—" said she.

"In fact," broke in Townsend, smiling, "Mrs. Barry-Smith and I have been discussing very—very interesting subjects." His manner was perfection; but, as he stood aside to let them pass, he gripped the back of his chair somewhat more firmly than was absolutely necessary.

III

"AND so," said Townsend, in his soul, as the men redistributed themselves, "she's married—married while you were pottering with big moose and battles and such trifles—oh, you ass! And to a man named Barry-Smith—Manchester and cotton goods, most likely—and—and Jimmy Travis is telling a funny story—laugh, you ass! No, I won't laugh—it's disgusting. Why isn't he at home—with a wife and carpet slippers—instead of here, grinning like a fool over some blatant indecency? He ought to marry; every young man ought to marry. Oh, you futile, abject, burbling ass! Why aren't you married—married years ago—with a home of your own and a brougham and—and bills from the kindergarten every quarter? Oh, you ass!" He snapped the stem of his glass carefully, and scowled with morose disapproval at the unconscious Mr. Travis.

He found her subsequently, inspecting a bulky folio with remarkable interest. There was a lamp with a red shade that cast a glow over her, such as one sometimes sees reflected from a great fire. The people about them were chattering idiotically, and something inside his throat prevented his breathing properly, and he was very miserable.

"Mrs. Barry-Smith," said he, gravely, "if you have any grace in your

heart for a very presumptuous, blundering, unhappy man, I pray you to forgive and forget all that I have said to you. I spoke, as I thought, to a free woman, who had the right to listen to my wild talk, even though she might elect to laugh at it. And now—now I hardly dare ask forgiveness."

Mrs. Barry-Smith inspected a view of the Matterhorn with careful deliberation. "Forgiveness?" said she, doubtfully.

"Indeed," said Townsend, "I do not deserve it." He smiled resolutely. "I had always known that somewhere, somehow, you would come into my life again. It has been my dream all these five years; but I dream carelessly. My visions had not included this—this obstacle."

She made wide eyes at him. "What?" said she.

"Your husband," he suggested, delicately.

The eyes flashed. There was an interval. A view of Monaco, to all appearances, awoke pleasing recollections. "I confess," said Mrs. Barry-Smith, "that—for the time—I had quite forgotten him."

"H'm!" said Townsend.

"I suppose," she hazarded, softly, "you think me very—very horrid?" She accompanied this query with a broadside that rendered such a supposition unthinkable.

"I think you—" His speech was hushed and breathless, and ended in a little click of the teeth. "Don't let's go into details," he pleaded, desperately.

Mrs. Barry-Smith descended to a truism. "It is usually unwise," said she, with the air of an authority. Then, addressing the façade of Notre Dame, "He is much—much older than I."

"I should prefer that. Of course it's none of my business," said Townsend, hastily.

"You—you see, you came and went so suddenly that—of course I never thought to see you again—not that I ever thought of it, of course." Her candor would have been cruel

had it not been suspiciously earnest. "And—and he was very pressing."

"He would be," assented Townsend, after consideration, "naturally."

"And he was a great friend of my father's, and I liked him."

"So you married him and lived happily ever afterward. Quite so!"

She smiled, inscrutably, a sphinx in Dresden china. "And yet," she murmured, plaintively, "I *should* like to know what you think of me."

"Now, in any other woman," thought Townsend, "that would have been vulgar." He set his teeth and faced the imminent danger bravely. "Prefacing my remarks," said he, in a level voice, "with the announcement that I pray God I may never see you after to-night, I think you the most adorable creature He ever made. What matter now? I have lost you. I think—ah, desire o' the world, what can I think of you? The thought of you dazzles me like flame—I do not think of you. I love you."

"Yes?" she queried, sweetly.

"I am going away," groaned Townsend, miserably, "for a long time."

"They always do," she lamented; "always."

"They?"

"Yes," she explained, lucidly; "when I—when I don't." She smiled reminiscently as Townsend rose.

"Think well of me," he pleaded.

"I will," she promised, with a swift, bewildering smile. Then she sighed.

She turned to a view of Capri. "It was very embarrassing," she murmured, "when that—that absent-minded Duchess of Drummington asked after him."

"H'm!" said Townsend, drily.

"You see," she explained, "he died three years ago."

Townsend sat down with startling abruptness. "Desire o' the world!" said he.

"Really," said she, tossing her head, and moving swiftly, "one would think we were on a desert island!"

"Or a strange roof," laughed Townsend, contentedly. "Of course," he

continued, wrapt in meditation, "we'll spend the honeymoon in Breslau. Yes—say three days in Paris—there's a piece at the Palais Royal they tell me isn't half bad—and then to Breslau." He caught his breath joyously. "Meanwhile, a ring—a heavy, Byzantine ring, with the stones sunk deep in the dull gold—five stones—R, a ruby—O, an opal—B, a beryl—E, emerald—R, ruby again—and T, a topaz. A sign that I possess you, desire o' the world—a badge of slavery that will weigh down your slender fingers!"

Very calmly she regarded the Bay of Naples; very calmly she turned to the Taj Mahal. "A strange man," she reflected aloud, "who has seen me twice, unblushingly assumes he is about to marry me! Of course," she sighed, tolerantly, "I know he's only an irresponsible maniac; otherwise——"

"Otherwise?"

"He would never ask me to wear an opal. Why," she cried, in horror, "I—I couldn't think of it!"

"You mean—?" said Townsend.

She closed the album, sadly, but firmly. "Dear boy," said Mrs. Barry-Smith, "we are utter strangers to each other. Why, I may have an unbridled temper, or an imported complexion, or a liking for Ibsen, for all you know. What you ask is preposterous. After a while, perhaps—besides, opals are unlucky," she concluded, decisively.

"Desire o' the world," said Townsend, in dolorous wise, "you are frightfully reasonable."

For a moment Mrs. Barry-Smith regarded him, critically. Then she shook her head, frowned, reopened the album, inspected the crater of Vesuvius, and sighed. A tender, pink-tipped hand rested on Townsend's arm for an instant—a very brief instant, yet one pulsing with a sense of many lights and of music playing somewhere, and of a certain man's heart keeping time to it.

"If you were to make it an onyx—" said Mrs. Barry-Smith.

DISMISSAL?

“FORGIVE,” you pray; again, “forgive!”
But still you throw

To Stella, passing there below,
A glance too lingering and sweet;
And still you greet

Fair Ida, with that tender smile—
Yet all the while
“Forgive,” you pray; “forgive!”

“I love,” you cry; “I love but you!”
And yet you bend

O’er Rose’s hand, and will not end
From whispering to Isabel
Quick words, that tell
In her bright eye and glowing cheek;
Then me you seek,
To cry, “I love but you!”

Go to, poor trifle! You must know
That he who sips
Too freely from all pretty lips
And finds in every lovely eye
Cause for a sigh,
Dwells but a moment in the thought
And then—is naught!

And yet—I do not know!

HILDEGARDE HAWTHORNE.



IN THEIR FAVOR

“ONE thing can be said in favor of those smoking volcanoes,” said Bunting
to Larkin.

“Name it.”

“They don’t smoke cigarettes.”



NATURAL CURIOSITY

“MAMMA, what does papa do?”

“He is the head of a great business, dear, making lots of money for
us all.”

“Some day, if I am good, will you take me down to his office and let me
look at him?”

THE IMMORALITIES OF MUSIC

By M. de Dunois

"The music of the wakened lyre
Dies not upon the quivering strings."

ALL the world is musical—or claims to be—and all the world is proud of its love for music. To be sure, there are some who, like *Joe Gargery*, know only one tune, and even there are many who know none at all. But, despite these, the world really is rather musical than otherwise, and most folk agree with Shakespeare in his condemnation of the unmusical person.

According to popular prejudice, Saint Cecilia at her organ is eminently the figure of a proper saint. Indeed, the commonplace conception of heaven would be unrecognizable were the seraphic choirs omitted. The average Christian confidently expects to make his beatitude eternally tuneful by picking at the strings of a golden harp.

And that which enters so definitely into the usual materialistic idea of Paradise has penetrated subtly into various philosophic systems. Thus, the Bible warrants a belief in the music of the spheres, for it tells us that the morning stars sang together the hymn of creation's joy. This and the like poetical imagery of the Hebrew Scriptures were interpreted as expressions of holy exactness by all the mystical metaphysicians who, like many moderns, made Pegasus a draught-horse.

A persistent practice of the ancients, of many races, was the analysis of Nature's harmonies. In this fashion the primitive Chinese resolved the world's scale into eight tones: the sounds, respectively, of the skin, the

stone, the metal, the baked earth, the silk, the wood, the bamboo and the gourd. But the Kabbalah, that marvelous compilation of the ancient rabbins in which are solved all mysteries, is much more elaborate. It declares that there are seven heavens, each with seven palaces and seven gates, corresponding subtly to the seven qualities of man and the seven intervals of music. The Sage of Hellas, master of mathematics and many marvels, recorded that he heard the mighty song of the singing spheres. And surely it were no unworthy dream to contemplate the universe as that limitless expanse wherein divinely majestic, infinitely splendid harmonic themes forever sound, wherein God is the supreme director of melodies throbbled by cycling spheres, by darting sunbeams, by volcano's roar and bird's pipe; wherein all things have their chorded part, wherein each and every atom is vocal, wherein only sin makes discords in the joyous symphony of life.

With such reinforcements of philosophical thought, it is small wonder that we, the ruck of mentality, confide with innocent completeness in music's worth. And this the more readily, since our emotions convince us, whether or no our minds are concerned. We, indeed, know in our own lives the manifold sweet charms of music, potent now as when Orpheus sang his spouse from hell. Happily, heedlessly, we believe in the pure and benign power of music. We regard with unmitigated approbation those homes where symbolic *Syrinx* shelters; even, we applaud, though perhaps only

tolerantly, those hearths where the Lares are somewhat inclined toward rag-time, as some Oriental gods toward fat. While we are most firmly convinced that, ethically as well as etymologically, virtues throng in the tuneful soul of the virtuoso.

But, counterpoint! Unfortunately, music, admirable as it may be—and none loves it more than I—is, like other delightful things, as dangerous as delicious. There are proofs of this, subjectively, objectively.

When Horace damned the crowd in his, "*Odi profanum vulgus, et arceo*," he bluntly, if metrically, expressed the unconfessed sentiment of many, even of most, even of some democratic persons. Now, it is true that our chief barrier against the mob of vulgarity is in our own refinement. In the varying degrees and scopes of refinement is found a clue to the differentiation of classes—in these and in clubs. And refinement is much praised. In some republican countries, where the equality of man is constitutional, though not always legal, there are societies and periodicals that flourish on the money drawn from seekers after culture—microbes are cultured in these days—etiquettish exactitudes are told to anxious correspondents in the daily press.

But refinement depends primarily on the senses. One becomes refined in gastronomic matters when, to use Milton's phrase, the palate becomes "judicious." Without palate Brillat-Savarin were of no account. The more the palate is trained, the more exact its discrimination, the more epicurean we. As of the gastronome, so of the esthete; he must depend for his best guidance on the skilled, artistic eye. The blind man, it is obvious, could have no appreciation of contours and hues, and only by much and careful training can he who has eyes to see, see with nicety. To many even that suggested earth of the utilitarian Confucius, a good, practical world, done in a monochrome of brown, would not be so very unsatisfactory, though to the lover of beauty, whose optic nerve is

sensitive to shades of vibration, such an earth must be a torture unspeakable. In like fashion, much of our refinement must depend on a cultivated sense of hearing. The ears are as necessary to music as is oxygen to flame. Beethoven could compose while deaf, but only because memory preserved that which he had once received. But there is no necessity of multiplying illustrations—no one will attempt to controvert the statement that refinement depends primarily on the senses. The cultivation of the body is properly essential to the best cultivation of the mind. The Greeks, in the time of Pericles, were the most refined people known to history, and they cultivated their bodies most. There are dangers in this—the history of the Greeks proves that; so, too, does the history of the greatest races and the greatest individuals through the ages.

Naturally, the musician must possess exquisite keenness of hearing. This is a constant fact of experience. The more skilled the musician, the more sagaciously expert his ear in the detecting of tonal properties. The musician must cultivate his sense of hearing to the extreme of delicacy. In this direction the physical constitution demands the most careful attention; matter becomes of the first importance, and the musician finds ever that his ear develops into a possession that is at once a blessing and a curse. All the glories of tune and harmony are made possible to him by its faithful shrewdness, but often the sensitive shell causes his soul real agonies when it gathers vibrations that are to many pleasant music, to him distracting noise.

The cultivation of one sense carries with it the cultivation of all. The musician must give heed to his ear; that physical organ requires constant attention; and the regard thus voluntarily lavished on this single material part draws involuntary attention to the other material parts of the man's nature. The great composer not only dreams of celestial resolutions, he sees

visions that are the setting of the sounds. The reverse is true of the painter. Men with no notion of melody may paint with the mechanical exactness of draughtsmen, but the master who realizes on canvas a conception truly noble must possess an ear conscious of tonal beauties as well as an eye for color-schemes. The solidarity of man's nature is such that the every power must be dynamic, if genius of any sort is to find its highest expression. Pursuing this train of thought, we are convinced that the ideal musician must develop every sense complementarily, as he cultivates his sense of sound. And this principle concerning the ideal applies in proportion to all makers of music.

The result is inevitable; the musician's senses clamor for attention; the material parts of him are persistently in evidence; the carnal nature assumes an importance aggressive and pervasive. With the receptive and acutely sensitive temperament which is always characteristic of the maestro each refinement of sense appeals to him in greater or less degree; by his imagination, normally active, constantly stimulated by his art, every delight that cultivated senses appreciate is presented to his contemplation as opportunity serves. A new succession of possible joys is shown in sensuous panorama to his eager soul. These joys may be good for the man, and they may not. Certainly, there is insidious and incessant danger.

So much we may hint of the subjective dangers in music. Let us now turn to the objective phase.

Music, *per se*, is not always and necessarily a good thing. Indeed, it may be, even it often is, distinctly evil. In itself, music may be elevating and noble; in itself it may be degrading and vile; moreover, in itself music may be of an indeterminate character, and in that case its beneficial or its harmful effects depend upon the hearer's moral attitude, or upon determining environment. For example, certain florid styles of music may be used in the Mass; the devout

auditors hear the jubilation of angelic hymns. Precisely the same style of music rendered under non-religious conditions presents to the listeners visions of gay, wholly mundane revels. Like strains provoke one person to holy contemplation of the Blessed Virgin, another to thoughts of wanton luxuries. The bells beat madly their carillon of joy to the crowds on a festival of mirth; the same tones are a fierce jangle of alarm to those who listen in terror when the bells warn that an enemy is near.

All things emanate from God, but most things suit the devil's large needs, and that ingenious and profound spirit of evil uses them for his own damnable ends. Music is not a solace and a strength to Israel only; the Prince of Darkness, lord of all wickedness as he is, is none the less a marvelous singer, as, alas! poor mortals know too well. When Sennacherib's eighty thousand men were encamped about Jerusalem, the Angel Gabriel came to them in the night and by his music's spell drew away their very souls from out their bodies. Such is the tale of the rabbins. Satan, like Gabriel, gains men's souls by his melodies—but not for heaven. The pathos of the fate that comes on those who listen to the songs of the sirens is not an allegory. Sin's delights are never shown so fairly masked as when summoned to the view by music's enchanting art.

"Wein, Weib, und Gesang."

The last is not the least in Satan's triple crown.

The comprehension of music requires three parts in man: the body the mind, the soul. The body, whether pure or impure, must be of refined sensitiveness; the mind, logical or illogical, must be subtly intelligent toward the sounds' meaning; the soul, godlike or impious, must be so emotionable that it sways to the music's passion.

We may safely say that music does not necessarily make its lover better morally. On the contrary, it may work him irreparable moral

injury, since it exposes him to multiplied and insidious temptations. If one would argue that he who is perverted by music, would without music have been perverted by something else, we reply that such a possibility in no way affects the contention that music may be a successful agent for immorality.

The tendency of our reasoning is justified by the examples in history of evil persons who were great musicians. Sappho, who first employed the Mixolydian mode in music, was one of the most renowned voluptuaries in the world's records, so that her name is the symbol of a vice. Nero, the most monstrous of all the Roman monsters, was one of the most proficient musicians of his time. Paganini was grossly sensual in his disposition, while as an artist his name is synonymous with incomparable power, despite his fondness for legerdemain. In short, we may believe of him that, with equal power, he played the fiddle and—the devil. Chopin, whom George Sand described as a high-blown consumptive and exasperating nuisance, was a finished virtuoso at nineteen, and his morals, if he ever had any, were finished at a like early age. The Abbé Liszt sought in the church a sure refuge from the women he had promised to marry. Berlioz composed a "Symphonie Fantastique," and lived one as well. It were unnecessary to multiply instances; it were tactless to refer to celebrities of more recent date. One acquainted with contemporary musical history can, perhaps, find other examples for himself. The lesson that music is not necessarily a purifying force is clearly taught. A broader illustration of the same truth is found in the state of ancient Greece. When the nation

was in its prime the people were musical; when it was in its decadence, they were more musical. Not only did good old Socrates thrum the lyre, but melody was the accomplishment of every youth, gilded, or ungilded, in the vice-plagued land.

In addition, the familiar facts of life oblige us to admit that music is openly active in vicious directions. A bayadere must be incited to her extravagances by the rush and throb of rude music. The cachucha of the Andalusians is a dance singularly vivacious, graceful and sensual. The Spanish clergy have made many efforts to suppress the dance. Unfortunately for their efforts, the music for the cachucha is such that the women when they hear it will dance, dance with spirit and abandon altogether delightful to themselves and obnoxious to the clerical authorities. In fine, certain tunes would, were they heard for the first time from a cathedral organ, yet echo the license of a café chantant; there are airs that reek with the ribaldry of the can-can.

Such is music, and such is man. Like man, music, too, is "the glory and the scandal of the universe." Music need not harm any, but it has, unhappily, manifold capacities for harm. Like all other of man's enjoyments, it may work him vast moral injury. We hear endless platitudes concerning the refining power of music. Yes, it is a mighty refining force, one that cannot be too widely employed. Only, it is well to bear in mind that its refinement is not always and necessarily for good, and to remember that the moral taints it may engender are most daintily laid on the soul's whiteness, so delicately and so subtly that the defilement may hardly be noted until the ruin of virtue is complete.



IT WAS COSTLY

"DID he break the engagement with Miss Spendthrift?"
 "No, the engagement broke him."

A WOMAN FRIEND

By Zoe Anderson-Norris

THE light of Adrian's cigar twinkled between impatient first and second fingers. Presently the hand rested itself on the stone ledge of the veranda, and, his eyes fixed on the Hudson, he commenced his argument at the point where he had left off.

"Dorothy," said he—Dorothy, very still in her Summer white, occupied an adjacent rocking-chair similar to his own, her eyes also fixed on the slow-moving boats on the river—"it takes several eons to convince a woman that an hour or so of a man's time should belong to him, to do with as he pleases; that a few days of his life should be left free to be given to his old companions, men companions, friends he had made before he was married, friends who must not be neglected if they are to be kept. Now, we have been married for three months, and I have never yet been able to convince you that a second of my time should be my own."

Dorothy interrupted him, gently. "Didn't you say," she reminded him, "that Donaldson told you it took two years exactly to convince his wife of the selfsame thing?"

"But," with a comprehensive gesture of explanatory hands, "look at the difference in the wives!"

The stroke, for some incomprehensible reason, failed of the desired effect. He hastened to obliterate its failure.

"A man must have the companionship of his kind," he went on. "He craves it; it is necessary to his nature; and it is no discredit to his wife, Dorothy," suavely. "No matter how charming a woman may be, her com-

panionship wears on one in the course of time. No matter how happily a man is married, he occasionally needs a change."

He flashed a moody glance on her. "If it isn't given him voluntarily," he continued, mutinously, "he takes it."

Dorothy gave vent to an almost imperceptible sigh, but said nothing.

"Once in a while," continued her husband, "a man must be with the boys. He wants to lock arms with them, to laugh with them, to talk with them. He wants to talk horse and dog and automobile, things about which woman knows nothing, or next to nothing. It is as necessary for him to escape now and then from the hot-house atmosphere of the drawing-room and take to the woods as it is for him to breathe. Sometimes a mad desire seizes him to jump in a boat and row up a strong stream against the current, employing his superfluous energy in the long, free swing of the oars."

"I am not very good at understanding," acknowledged Dorothy, interrupting, "but I can partly understand that. The only time I ever got a chance to scream as much as I wished was in the Rockies. I pretended to be waking the echoes, to see how they sounded, ringing off into cañon after cañon, then dropping into silence; but I was really screaming off the nervousness that had been accumulating for years."

After a moment of silence, "Grown-up people," she added, "should be allowed to do as the children do—lie down once in a while and kick and scream, and kick and scream."

"If you understand the situation so well," mused Adrian, rather surprised that she should have understood it so well, "why put obstacles in the way of my working off steam?"

He leaned toward her in the dark.

"Do you know what I should like to do right now?" he queried.

"No; what?"

"Rush deep into the underbrush of a wood and tramp and tramp and tramp, until I lost myself; then throw heart, soul and spirit into the work of finding myself again—and so forget."

Dorothy opened her lips to say, "Forget what?" but, upon reflection, closed them again. Claspings her hands behind her head, she rocked slowly back and forth.

"You couldn't conveniently row up a river at this time of night," she argued, "without running serious risk of getting drowned; and, no matter how reckless you may be, I am sure you don't wish to be drowned. Neither could you seek a thicket and lose yourself with impunity. There might be robbers or bears. But maybe it isn't too late yet to roam down Broadway in search of a boon companion. Would you like to do that?"

Adrian thrust two fingers in his vest pocket and took out his watch.

"It is never too late," he smiled, "to find some friend on Broadway, where people stay up all night. Nine—early!"

Dropping his cigar on the grass, he leaned toward her. "Are you sure," he inquired, with anxious solicitude, "that you won't care?"

Dorothy watched a little electric car on the Jersey side until it was out of sight, before she answered:

"I am sure."

She had hardly moved out of her position, though it was nearly an hour later, when an automobile whisked down the drive and stopped at the curb, its two lamps glowing in the dusk, like eyes.

"Is that you, Dorothy?" called out a voice.

Dorothy, gathering up her skirts,

ran down the steps and across the square grass-plot to the curb.

"Yes," she replied. "Why do they keep on thumping so, after they have stopped?"

"Don't ask me. Are you alone?"

"There are flowers and the electric car on the Jersey side, and tugboats pulling things up and down the river, and the stars are near to-night—so near you can almost fan them away!"

"But where is Adrian?"

"I like these automobiles," said Dorothy, "but when you are standing by one you always want to be patting the horse's head. That's the trouble."

"But where," insisted her cousin, "is Adrian?"

"You see," she explained, "it took Donaldson two years to convince his wife that he must have a few hours of the day or night to himself, but with me it was different. I am another sort of wife, a rather superior sort, I am led to believe. With me, it took only three months. Adrian is away."

"Where?"

"You must know," continued Dorothy, "that no matter how happily a man is married, he feels the need of the society of other men. There are so many, many things to talk about with men that you can't talk about with women—they don't understand. What do women know about horses and dogs and automobiles? It's the same as trying to take a long walk with a woman. Fancy a woman mincing along in high-heeled shoes, tagging after a man, tired and complaining."

"Dorothy," urged her cousin, "come and take a little drive with me. I haven't seen you to talk with you for the longest time—not since you were married. Go get your hat and come!"

"What will they say?"

"Nonsense! Aren't we cousins?"

"Two or three times removed."

"It doesn't matter, so long as we are cousins. Go and get your hat."

He hummed a tune as he waited for her. Once he interrupted it with a remark. "Stars near enough to be

fanned away," he repeated; "poor little lonely thing!"

Then she came down the steps in a hat of lace to match her gown, and got in; the automobile thumped, snorted, quieted, and they were off across town through the Park, thence to Fifth avenue, thence to Broadway, brilliant as in the daytime.

On their way back home, they brought up at a café that was arranged quite in the Parisian style, flanked by flowers, with little tables enclosed by a glistening green fence of box.

"Shall we stop here," he asked, "and have an ice?"

And Dorothy answered, brightly, "If you insist."

When he had succeeded in subduing the automobile, which had again taken to thumping, they alighted and followed an obsequious waiter to a small white table set in a corner, somewhat apart from the others. Glancing carelessly about, she saw a familiar face. With a slight elevation of eyebrows, indicative of surprise, she bowed.

"It's Adrian," said she.

Her cousin, turning in the same direction, bowed also.

By that time the waiter had brought the ices.

"It's a strange thing," murmured Dorothy, raising a spoonful to her lips, "this fondness men have for the society of other men. It is a real need. In the course of time the society of the most charming woman palls upon them. It doesn't compensate for that of men. Nobody—that is, no reasonable person—should expect it to. Why should it? A man is a man, and a woman is a woman."

"But," objected her cousin, "that is not a man Adrian is with, it is a woman."

Dorothy appeared not to hear.

"A strong nature," she resumed, "must associate with a strong nature. It is the law of nature. Like seeks

like. Just as one molecule searches for another molecule, so man searches for man. After a rain, have you ever watched drops of water dangling on a wire? how they rush to each other, intermingle, then fall to the ground?"

"Yes."

"Well, the need of one man for the society of another man seems to me to be something like that."

The automobile had puffed to the curb for the second time and had puffed away, and Dorothy once more sat on the veranda. As it was now several hours later, the constellations had changed somewhat, but they were still comparatively near; the tugs still towed; the electric car ran at intervals of greater length, but it ran. As before, she rocked back and forth, with the night for company.

After a long time a figure came in sight, and Adrian, having ascended the steps, stood before her.

They exchanged some trivial remarks concerning nothing of much importance; then:

"Dorothy," he said, with gentle firmness, "Dick is your cousin; but do you think it looks well for you to be seen with him at a public café so soon after we are married, particularly as he used to be a sort of sweetheart of yours? Is that kind of thing customary? Have you thought of what people will say?"

"Yes," she answered, "I have thought of what people will say; but I couldn't help it. A sudden impulse came over me, which I found it impossible to control."

"And what," he questioned, eagerly, his voice faltering a trifle, "was that impulse, Dorothy?"

"It was the irresistible longing," replied she, quietly, "that now and then comes over a woman, no matter how happily married she is, to be with a woman friend."



TIPS come to him who waits.

Oct. 1902

THE CREATION OF LILITH

By Bliss Carman

THIS happened in the Garden,
Ages on ages since.
When noontide made a pleasant shade
Of ilex, pear and quince,

The Gardener sat and pondered
Some beauty rarer still
Than any he had wrought of earth
And fashioned to his will.

"Now who will be her body?"
"I," said the splendid rose,
"Color, fire and fragrance,
In imperial repose."

"Who will be her two eyes?"
"I," said the flag of blue,
"Sky and sea all shadowy
Drench me wholly through."

"Who will be her bright mouth?"
"I," the carnation said,
"With my old Eastern ardor
And my Persian red."

"Who will be, among you,
The glory of her hair?"
His glance went reaching through the noon;
The yellow rose was there.

"Who will be her laughter,
Her love-word and her sigh?"
Among the whispering tree-tops
A breath of wind said, "I."

"And whence will come her soul?"
Answer there was none.
The Gardener breathed upon her mouth,
And lo, there had been done

The miracle of beauty
Outmarveling the flowers;
While the great blue dial
Recorded the slow hours.

LE BRACELET

Par Paul Margueritte

LA PETITE Madame Doz ne souhaitait rien tant qu'un bracelet, pour l'anniversaire de ses dix ans de mariage. Était-ce qu'elle se regardait comme l'ayant bien et légitimement gagné, par tant d'heures et de soins consacrés à son mari et au ménage, à habiller ou à sortir les enfants? Cela lui apparaissait-il au contraire comme trop beau, plus beau qu'elle ne méritait, car ces dix ans de vie n'avaient pas été sans bouderies ni querelles? Quoi qu'il en soit, elle exigeait un bracelet; et pas un bracelet d'argent—d'or, s'il vous plaît, mais d'or solide et pas en "doublé"; elle voulait une gourmette de cheval, grande largeur, à mailles lourdes et cossues.

Seulement, cela coûtait cher, et Hippolyte, son mari, hochait la tête: pourrait-on? ne pourrait-on pas?

L'anniversaire approchait, et Hippolyte ne se prononçait pas. Madame Doz était sur les épines. Quand elle sortait avec lui, elle l'arrêtait devant tous les bijoutiers.

"Oh! vois celui-là," disait-elle. "Non! pas le petit; il n'est pas distingué, d'abord. Le gros! Demande le prix, mon chéri, veux-tu? Cela n'engage à rien."

Hippolyte, qui était timide et d'une timidité accrue par le sentiment de sa position modeste, hésitait; la jolie petite Madame Doz le poussait, une fièvre de convoitise dans ses yeux couleur de noisette:

"Va donc! on ne te mangera pas!"

Et quand il reparaissait, confus, en balbutiant: "On en demande cinq cent cinquante francs."

Elle disait avec conviction: "Ce n'est pas trop cher." Elle ajoutait: "Tu me l'achèteras, n'est-ce pas, chéri, mon bracelet? Si tu ne me l'achetais pas pour nos dix ans de mariage, tu sais, je serais malade, et si triste! Je croirais que tu ne m'aimes pas; et, au fait, tu ne m'aimes guère, je le crains bien, puisque tu montres si peu d'empressement à me faire plaisir!"

Hippolyte baissait la tête, comme font les faibles; très amoureux de Fanny, il acceptait ses rebuffades sans parler. Oh! il n'eût pas demandé mieux que d'acheter le bracelet, mais cinq cent cinquante francs dans un petit ménage, la somme comptait. Parfois, il remuait ses doigts l'un après l'autre, comme un homme qui calcule.

"Qu'est-ce que tu fais, mon chat?" demandait la petite femme. "Tu penses à donner le bracelet à ta chérie jolie? Ecoute, je voulais me faire faire une robe, une robe pour toi, une robe pour te faire plaisir, une robe bleue comme tu les aimes! Eh bien! si tu m'achètes le bracelet, je me priverai de la robe. Hein! c'est du mérite, ça?"

Il objectait timidement:

"Ne disais-tu pas que les enfants ont besoin de linge, et que les pantalons de Loulou sont un peu courts?"

Elle affirmait: "Cela ne presse pas, je les allongerai."

Alors, comme un escargot qui rentre sa tête et ses cornes, Hippolyte rentrait en lui-même et n'en sortait plus; il méditait, perplexe: "Cela lui fera tant de plaisir!" Mais, d'autre part, la raison, la sagesse—

II

FANNY, un matin, tournant par la chambre, lui dit d'un air grave:

"Et si je contribuais à l'achat du bracelet, si je te donnais une partie de l'argent, qu'est-ce que tu dirais?"

Il ouvrit de grands yeux.

"Ah! j'ai tort!" soupira-t-elle. "Cet argent, je l'ai économisé sou à sou sur le ménage, j'ai grappillé dix sous par là, deux francs par ici, et je comptais bien que tu ne le saurais jamais; mais qu'est-ce que tu veux? je suis trop bonne—je suis trop bête! Je te vois là si malheureux. Eh bien! je vais te donner cent francs de mon argent. C'est tout ce que j'ai; ne t'imagines pas que j'ai économisé davantage. Les veux-tu? Nous paierons le bracelet avec."

Hippolyte tendit la main. Mais, par une confiance qui l'honorait, elle déclare qu'elle payerait elle-même le marchand.

"Ecoute, nous y passerons ce soir, à ta sortie du bureau. Plus j'y pense, plus ce gros bracelet me dit. Nous entrerons et je l'essaierai, comme cela, en passant. Cela n'engage à rien."

Le soir, ils s'arrêtèrent, comme les jours précédents, à la devanture du bijoutier.

"Oh, le voilà!" s'écria Fanny. "Regarde, il est vraiment très beau. Comme il brille! Entrons. Seulement, tu ne l'achèteras pas, tu ne diras rien, tu me laisseras marchander."

III

Ils pénétrèrent dans le magasin. Madame Doz se fit montrer le bracelet, l'ajusta à son poignet; elle le regardait amoureusement, en soupesait le poids, en caressait le poli, en secouait les feux avec des mines si gentilles que le bijoutier lui-même, homme gras et chauve, subissait le charme de la petite femme, et lui souriait de son plus aimable sourire. Elle compta bien profiter de cette séduction et demanda:

"Combien, monsieur, ce bracelet? Quatre cents francs?"

"Cinq cent cinquante," glissa-t-il tout bas, avec une insinuante douceur.

"C'est trop cher!"

Il sourit, d'un sourire appuyé d'une œillade langoureuse: "Non, ce n'est pas trop cher. Il vous va si bien, et c'est un beau travail; j'y perds à vous le vendre. Pour vous, ce sera cinq cent quarante."

Elle regardait, perplexe, Hippolyte. "C'est encore bien cher, n'est-ce pas?" demanda-t-elle d'un petit air de châtèrie, une hypocrisie rusée dans la voix.

"C'est—un peu cher, oui," murmura le mari, "mais si ça te fait bien plaisir—" Il avait l'air résigné et malheureux d'un homme qui pense: "Moi, ça ne me ferait aucun plaisir de me promener avec une gourmette d'or au poignet. Non, aucun! Mais des goûts et des couleurs—"

"Alors," fit-elle en se décidant, "je le garde. Paye, mon ami."

Il tira son porte-monnaie en la regardant.

"Ah! oui, c'est vrai!—tu n'as pas assez."

Elle tira de sa poche, avec lenteur et sans empressement, un petit porte-monnaie, y prit les cent francs. "Voilà," fit-elle avec un soupir. Et elle réclama une facture, en regardant le bracelet qui faisait bel effet, vraiment, sur sa peau.

IV

SITOT dehors:

"Eh, bien! es-tu contente?"

"Oh! mon chéri," s'écria-t-elle avec feu, "que tu es bon! Je t'embrasserais si nous n'étions pas dans la rue!"

Elle s'arrêta, cinq minutes après, sous une vitrine éclairée, examina le bracelet. "C'est curieux," fit-elle, "je le croyais plus gros: est-ce bien le même que nous avons vu hier?"

"Mais bien sûr, ma chère."

"Oh! il est très beau! très beau!" fit-elle.

Cinq minutes plus loin, elle s'arrêta encore pour voir si le fermoir tenait bien. "Pourvu que ce soit solide!" dit-elle avec une petite moue.

Au dîner, elle demanda: "Alors, vraiment, il te paraît beau?"

"Mais oui, et toi?"

"Oh! moi, je suis très contente, très contente. Je le croyais plus gros seulement. . . ."

Et elle ajouta, le feu d'un désir nouveau dans les yeux:

"Vois-tu, pour le prochain anniversaire, dans dix ans, ce que je veux, c'est une bague de brillants fins avec une perle au milieu—une perle grosse comme un pois."

Un petit silence suivit; et elle conclut par ce mot bien féminin:

"C'est si amusant, de désirer!"



PING-PONGOMANIA

WHEN first at ping-pong I essayed,
Alas, to my regret,
The airy sphere sailed far away,

And nowhere near the

net.

I persevered and changed my aim;
The best that I could get,
Would be to send that horrid ball

Right underneath the

net.

Success I hoped would some day come
And I might win a set;
But still that irksome ball, you see,

Went plumb into the

net.

At last success has come to me—
The smile is with me yet!
I've learned the way to send the ball

So nicely o'er the

net.

HARRY CROWN BLOOMBERG.



ON THE SHORE

"HOW sweet it would be to live alone with you in yonder lighthouse!" he whispered, tenderly.

"Yes," she murmured, abstractedly; "and do light housekeeping."

TO DOLLY

DOLLY, oft I've sung of thee,
 Hymned thy praise from sea to sea,
 In what really seemed to me
 Terms endearing.
 There were others, I admit;
 Business, dear, demanded it;
 That I angered you a bit,
 I'm a-fearing.

Still, just think of all the times.
 I have put you in my rhymes,
 Till it seemed that wedding chimes
 Were a-nearing.
 How I gave you eyes of blue,
 Eyes of gray or hazel hue,
 Gave you sometimes black eyes, too,
 I'm a-fearing.

You've had small hands, brown or white,
 And a figure plump or slight,
 Large or just a wee, small mite
 Oft appearing.
 And your hair, scarce twice the same—
 Raven, golden, auburn flame,
 E'en a chestnut it became,
 I'm a-fearing.

Listen, Dolly, now I pray;
 Let me put these masks away;
 Let me see yourself to-day—
 'Twould be cheering.
 For a thought which doth appall,
 Lately hath me in its thrall:
 That you don't exist at all,
 I'm a-fearing!

TRUMAN ROBERTS ANDREWS



“‘HONESTY is the best policy,’” asseverated the stubborn-chinned man on the night train.

“It isn't the best policy in my business,” observed the man with the open countenance.

“And why not in yours?” blustered the stubborn-chinned man, aggressively.

“Because,” replied the man with the open countenance, “I am a manufacturer of antique furniture.”

THE ENTERTAINER

By Mrs. Everard Cotes

(Sara Jeannette Duncan)

I CANNOT in the least say why my interest was so completely caught by the two women as they walked into the dining-room of the hotel at Lake Onogo; there was nothing about either of them of a character which could be called distinctive. Perhaps that was itself the subtle reason; in America it does single you out, if you are a woman, to lack the more trenchant marks of personality. These two would have been ordinary anywhere, ordinary young and ordinary middle-aged. The mother stooped a little, the girl held herself very straight. They were both in black; their dress spoke plaintively of effort to keep within hailing distance of the current fashion. In little ways, the cut of her sleeve, the dressing of her hair, the daughter was punctiliously abreast of it, but she was so barely adequate, so undecorated, that she might have served as a theory, a diagram of the mode. She had a pale composure which might have been anxiety in more private moments; it was the look of a person accustomed to deal timidly, and not always successfully, with a variety of trying circumstances. The composure sat upon features which, if not exactly pretty, were at least very well; she seemed just to attain good looks as she seemed just to attain everything else, in spite of things that were against her, cheek-bones rather broad, eyes rather light, a hint of anemia. The one fact about the two women that one could really lay hold of was their manner, which was so unobtrusive as to be quite marked.

The young man came upon the scene

hardly ten minutes later. As he took his seat, I saw the mother and daughter exchange a glance, which to any aroused intelligence—and by that time mine was very active—would have thrown a flood of light and created a situation. "There he is again!" their eyes exclaimed, with a strong underlining of disapproval; the girl compressed her lips. After that they looked every way but his, though he, from his uneasy seat, was plainly striving not to make his gaze at them too fixed and too devouring. He withdrew his eyes by jerks, then let his glance again circle nearer and nearer, until it dropped upon the pair with an absorption that proved the insincerity of its interest in anything else. A mind of the higher mathematical sort might have measured this centripetal glance, it moved with such method to its centre.

It was unmistakable that he, the new-comer, belonged to the community already numerous in the hotel; he bore all the race-marks by which we most easily identify the Hebrew. He was dressed with the nattiness that attaches to the American man's attire, and to this his bosom added the opulent flash of a solitaire. He was cuffed and curled and waxed and brushed to the last possibility—perfumed, too, I imagine. Yet his person was meager, even in its expensive outfit; he looked amiable and timid, but steadfast, like an animal under magnetism. Perceiving his infatuation, one involuntarily computed his resources, and from the first I was sorry

for him—he had so little beyond the material, and that was so plainly scorned. Yet his regard, when it fastened upon the girl in black, was wonderful in its beatitude; one would have thought it, but for her plain indignation, the quiet glorying of an accepted lover. I was at some pains, in leaving the room, not to intersect it.

Incident, even subjective and undeveloped, was incident at Onogo—which was, to be precise, a lake and a hotel, in a mountain solitude of the Adirondacks. It had once been a hunter's lodge in the wilderness; while I stayed there it held two hundred Summer people, most of them from New York and Philadelphia, who came in order to be more luxurious than they were at home, with the agreeable contrast of the forest primeval. By day the two hundred sported out of doors or rocked in the wide verandas, but by night we still knew, if not the hunters' solitude, at least his lack of resource. We were hemmed in, thrown in upon one another; beyond the electric lights of the hotel there was nothing but the stars in the lake and the shy deer in the forest. We gathered nightly, for lack of alternative, in the big, bright drawing-room, where, from behind the papers brought by the evening mail, we discreetly observed one another and proceeded to such acquaintance as seemed warrantable. The room was all done in yellow damask, the long curtains that floated inward with the fire-scented wind were patterned with yellow fleurs-de-lis; there were flowers in bowls, etchings, a grand piano. Granted an interest, the place, I reflected, was pleasant enough to turn it over in; and that was the very moment when, without circumstance or ceremony, my young lady in black took up her position beside her mother, who occupied the music-stool. The elder lady struck two or three chords that sounded premonitory and did in fact insure silence; and then, immediately and unhesitatingly, the daughter lifted her voice in song. The performance was so direct and matter-of-fact as to be almost disconcerting; the two hun-

dred stared, not quite sure for an instant that a liberty had not been taken with their corporate body. It was a surprise in the nature of an attack; I, too, was so astonished that I looked rather than listened. The pair at the piano were quite isolated, they turned between them the pages of their own music, going through the song with a sort of heroic patience, as if it were all in the day's work. Plainly, they did their very best, expecting no allowances, putting out no claim to the kindly judgment of friends. Their odd detachment made an appeal to us all, though this was the last thing they would have been aware of, and at the end of the song—it had the gay familiarity of a popular opera—the room applauded, as it were, the intrepidity of the singer.

The young lady bowed, unsmilingly, as if this were only another part of the routine; the elder one, also, half-turned her head to acknowledge the compliment and perked herself old-fashionedly and settled her bracelets, while her daughter took more sheets from a portfolio, placed them before her and waited again in the attitude of minstrelsy, while the precise fingers struck the chords of prelude. It was then that I, glancing around for some solution, caught sight of the hotel manager standing stolidly in the door. His look was critical, his thumbs were in the arm-holes of his waistcoat, a pose which we had learned to recognize as his most managerial. The girl, too, undoubtedly saw him; her face reflected a spur and she sang in his special direction. The piece was one of those high, cascading Italian things, a *tour de force* for a prima donna. It explained very clearly and rather painfully that the young lady who rendered it was no prima donna, present or potential; it flouted a poor little unwarrantable ambition; and the three daughters of the Philadelphia railway magnate, who had just finished their musical education at Heidelberg, glanced at one another and smiled. Yet the performance was, in a way, creditable; it was marked by real effort,

sincere pains and a degree of achievement; it made one just sorry for the lack of discernment that had set the singer such a task. The manager, I noticed, stood it through with pursed lips and an eye on the audience. When it was finished, he turned upon his heel, with a movement which said that, if there were people in the hotel who liked that sort of thing, there it was for them; he didn't pretend to like it.

There it was for them, and they listened with commendable politeness till this second instalment of the offering was complete. Then a great many of them gathered up their fans or the innumerable pages of their newspapers, and made restlessly for the veranda or the smoking-room. There it was for them, but they had plainly had enough. When the third song came to an end, only a few elderly ladies were left, scattered about on the yellow sofas; most of them of the stout, complacent kind that never sit down for less than an hour, and refuse no form of entertainment after dinner. And, too, people began to talk. At the noise of the voices and the movement, I thought I noticed a trembling in the wrinkled fingers that played the accompaniment. As they finished, she, the mother, looked furtively around at the emptying room; her thin cheek flushed, and she glanced at her daughter, who spread before her still another song. Meeting the mother's eyes, the girl stood for a moment irresolute; then, with a quick movement, she swept the music from the piano, and the two left the room by steps that plainly tried not to hurry.

Had they gone to cry in their bedrooms? It was impossible not to feel uncomfortable about them. It occurred to me, quite as something to be resented, that even the insignificant young man of the dinner-table had failed them; he, at all events, might have contributed a faithful pair of ears. But, as I walked out upon the veranda for a good-night look at the

lake, a figure shrank still deeper into a garden chair to let me pass, and I saw that I misjudged a devotion which had been there all the time, pulling at a long cigar, worshipping in the shadows.

When I went next morning to complain of the ice-water boy, I found the manager approachable, almost amiable. Some domestic satisfaction, perhaps, had warmed him. As a rule he froze the marrow of our bones and made our blood boil, a capacity in this class of person in America which, for some curious reason, seems to pay. But that morning he turned upon my complaint a countenance almost human; he said he would attend to the ice-water boy, and his tone suggested that I might, without any serious risk, prolong the conversation. I immediately asked him who were the ladies who had contributed to our entertainment the night before. His face clouded at once, and I shrank into myself, yet hung upon his answer.

"Their name's Adams," he replied; "Miss Adams is an entertainer."

"An entertainer," I repeated, clinging desperately to my opportunity.

"That's what I said." He fixed upon me an irritated eye, which coldly recognized that there were many fools in the world. "The idea is to amuse the guests—they do it for their board. Not much amusement in it last night, far as I could see. They regularly cleared the room."

"What an extraordinary idea!" I ejaculated, meaning no harm.

"I don't know as it's so very extraordinary. Over there on the Continent they keep English Church ministers to preach on Sundays, and they don't give 'em a cent but their board. Resident parsons wouldn't cut any pie on this side, but we've got to do something, so we turn on an entertainer. Plenty of 'em glad to come."

"It's new to me," I said. "Does the entertainer go from place to

place? Where was Miss Adams last?"

"At the Bennett House, Ossawepie, and I wish she'd stayed there; but I guess they had to get her to move along. I might 'a' known the way she wrote she wasn't any good—she was a considerable sight too anxious. I expect it'll be a pretty hard job getting her out of these woods; they say the old lady's consumptive, and this is a long way the best place for her."

Without further parley, the manager turned his substantial back upon me and moved off. His walk was a kind of square lurch; it expressed, to my indignant mind, the most callous intention. Inwardly I said, "In half an hour their boxes will be at the door."

I glanced at the register; there they were among the arrivals of yesterday, "Miss Emmeline Adams, Mrs. Adams, Detroit, Mich." The handwriting was evidently that of the mother, and it was touching, the way in which she gave the girl precedence. It spoke of belief and admiration; it almost required one to find her a genius. But what a handicap of a name, the very stamp of mediocrity—Emmeline Adams! Farther down I looked, and duly found the little Jew, also, Mr. Paul Nathan. There could be no doubt, he was the only man in the day's list. I had, at all events, the labels to the situation.

It was frequently said in the hotel that Mr. Humboldt's bark was worse than his bite. I never could see that the proverb should excuse either barking or biting, but, later on in the day, I was inclined to acknowledge its rough justice as applied to the manager. The Onogo Hotel stage-coach did not carry the Adamses off to catch the next train. Instead, I found them after luncheon, occupying my particular nook in the veranda, the magazine I had left there reposing in Mrs. Adams's lap.

"Now, this is your chair!" she exclaimed, getting up in a way that expressed a habit of relinquishment

with apology. The daughter, who was sitting on the edge of the veranda, did not look around.

"No, really," I replied; and, indeed, it was not my property. "The magazine I will acknowledge, but please keep it if it interests you. And pray don't get up."

Mrs. Adams sank back, with a flattered air, and I cast about me for a way of improving my opportunity. I said something about the lake looking best from that corner, and she hurried to agree with me and to make further comments that would show her quite as well disposed toward acquaintance as I was. She was pathetically anxious to talk, and presently she interrupted herself to say, with shy pleasantry, "Now, if you won't sit down, I'll feel as if I just had to give up your chair"; at which I did sit down.

We talked as people do talk in casual contact, and I learned that Mrs. Adams's home was in Detroit, which was, apparently, a city of beautiful homes. On the avenue where Mrs. Adams once—but now, alas, no longer—lived, they were ravishing, wreathed in clematis, the mower never silent and the garden-sprinkler never quiet upon their lawns. I had almost to promise not to go back to England without seeing Detroit.

The girl, all this time, sat unmoved on the edge of the veranda, her elbows on her knees, her chin propped in her hands, her eyes fixed on the afternoon shadows in the water. I glanced now and then at the high shoulders and the narrow back she presented to us, thinking I saw obstinacy and a tinge of resentment in the way she sat there, confronting the lake as if it were the situation, in which she found a hostility at which I could only guess—poor thing!

"I must thank you," I had at last the chance of saying, "for the pleasure you gave us last night. It is so seldom that any one touches the piano in the evenings. It has been mute for days."

I had a pang of compunction, Mrs.

Adams looked so gratified. "Why, how sweet of you to say so!" she exclaimed, with such feeling that I wondered what I had said. "I must tell my daughter. It will quite cheer her up—we all want cheering up sometimes, don't we? Or, perhaps," she went on, lowering her voice with a little nod of private understanding that took my good heart all for granted, "you'll tell her yourself—she would value it so much more! Emmeline! I want to present you to a lady who has just been complimenting me on your voice." She turned to me. "Now, might I ask your name?"

I supplied it, and Mrs. Adams effected the introduction. "My daughter, Miss Emmeline Adams. This lady, daughter, has been saying such nice things about your singing last night."

Miss Adams had not risen; she returned my bow from where she sat, still leaning her head on one hand, with a smile which she evidently kept in listless readiness for casual strangers like me. At Mrs. Adams's words she blushed sharply, and a twitch, hardly a frown, passed across her forehead. "I heard what she said, mother," she retorted, quickly, fixing upon her parent calm eyes which had not, above all things, the intention of being taken in. I rushed, of course, into the breach; it would have required, I think, an iron rectitude to keep out of it. Afterward I myself blushed to remember the extravagances I had uttered. I praised her voice, her production, her feeling; there was nothing I did not praise. And she simply sat and looked at me, with more reserve than she had shown to her mother, but plainly undeceived. Her open disbelief would have been really more than I deserved, but for the constant delighted chorus of the mother, who fairly bubbled over with appreciation of my discernment. At last Emmeline turned upon her a forlorn little smile.

"Mother's always trying to jolly me up," she said.

"Well," cried Mrs. Adams, with a

sprightly gesture, "and if I didn't who would?"

The unintentional shaft struck home, and the girl's face clouded again. Tears stood in her eyes. "You may well ask," she said, and got up hurriedly. "I'm going to lie down," she explained. "Don't stay out after the mist rises, mother," and she went into the house.

The mother sent a deprecating glance after her. "It seems to me," she said with a sigh, "that young people require a great deal more encouragement nowadays than they used to. Dear me! when I was that child's age a kind word about my playing would uplift me for a week. This generation must have notices in the newspapers."

"It is a competitive age," I remarked, blandly.

"But my daughter is not by any means herself to-day," Mrs. Adams went on, placidly; "she's got a real sore throat."

I hoped it was nothing serious; and Mrs. Adams said that it was not, that Miss Adams was subject to these ulcerated throats, that they didn't mean anything, but always made her feel low; they were worse in some ways than being down sick. "We were to have given a 'ballad evening' to-night, only for that," she explained. "Nothing takes, we find, like a ballad evening. But Mr. Humboldt has consented to postpone it till she is better."

It was then that I brought myself to admit that Mr. Humboldt's bark was worse than his bite.

"We do that, you know," Mrs. Adams continued, with a quick glance at me. "Miss Adams gets teaching in the Winter, and in the Summer we make a kind of tour, eking out my little pension by entertaining. Last year we took the resorts on the Maine coast; this year we're doing the Adirondacks."

I have a practical nature and the question that rose to my lips in view of their plain failure was: "Have you ever tried steamboats?" Then, remembering, as I instantly did, the Italian fiddles and flute, the man with

rings in his ears who whistled "Listen to the Mocking Bird," and the dirty felt hat that went around afterward in quest of silver, I was more than thankful that I had not asked it; especially as Mrs. Adams very soon gave me to understand that she considered entertaining as a "non-paying guest"—her own expression—much more dignified than doing it on any basis that might be represented by a hat.

"We meet so many pleasant people in that way, people of real culture who come and speak to us," she innocently preened; "and it is quite a holiday outing for my daughter. We feel sufficiently repaid by that, and prefer not to ask more."

While I pondered the holiday outing from Miss Adams's point of view, a sudden fit of coughing seized the mother. She bent under it; it was violent and long. "There!" she gasped, straightening herself at last and restoring her handkerchief to her pocket. "It must be distressing to hear any one go on and on, like that, but if you know the satisfaction it is to have a real good cough! When my daughter's around I daren't; she gets so worked up about it ever since a doctor told us it made me worse to cough. I don't believe a morsel of it myself, and as I've had to get along for the last four years with only one lung," she concluded, smiling, "I ought to know."

As she was in the midst of telling me how many distinguished people with one lung had attained old age, and how "it" always skipped a generation—her grandmother had died of "it"—and, above all, how she had benefited that Summer from the marvelous air of the Adirondack region, a shadow struck across the veranda between us, and we looked up, to discover its substance in Mr. Nathan. He stood defined against the glowing afternoon, taking off his hat with one hand and with the other casting away, rather markedly, a large and undoubtedly expensive cigar. Mrs. Adams's lip straightened; she seemed to straighten every-

where; she had only the barest civility for the deference of his greeting.

"Should you care to have me take you out on the lake, Mrs. Adams?" he asked. His voice was pleasant, but his smile, alas, had too short an upper lip; it curved up at the corners and the nose hooked down over it; it seemed to draw the narrow eyes nearer together. The timidity and supplication of the Ghetto started into life as he smiled.

"Why, that's very kind of you, I'm sure," she replied, and the cordial words contrasted oddly with the frigid inflection; "but I think I won't go on the water to-night; thank you all the same."

He stood rebuffed. The resource of locomotion did not seem to occur to him; he remained with his hands in his pockets, chinking coin, his gaze vaguely roaming over the woods and the lake.

"I hope Miss Adams likes it as well here as at the Bennett House," he brought forth at last, with elaborate indifference.

"I guess she does, thank you."

"Well, good evening."

"Well, good evening."

As he turned away, Mrs. Adams gave me a look which indicated her certainty that I understood. I did understand, but I felt hostile; I thought she had been hard, and I blankly returned her glance.

"He is a Mr. Nathan," she explained. "We knew him at the Bennett House and at Chippeha; we don't seem able to go anywhere without seeing him. I suppose," she added, more discreetly, "he happens to be making the same little tour that we are. But I thought I just wouldn't introduce him. He's the kind of person that does fasten himself on so!"

It seems odd to me now, looking back, that neither then nor at any other time did I make actual acquaintance with Mr. Paul Nathan. I may confess that I hardly encouraged circumstances to give me this pleasure. Mr. Nathan was a piece in the game on whom I had no desire to lay an interfering

finger; besides, he might be depended upon to move automatically, poor young man! But I presently became so involved that I wonder how I was able to hold myself a mere spectator with such consistency, in so far as he was concerned. From the beginning he seemed to suspect me, to put it roughly, of taking a hand; I could feel it in his shy and distant scrutiny, in which, also, I thought I read now and then something like appeal. But, if he did see in me a person of influence, the idea of ingratiating never occurred to him; he left me to my own sense of what his humility and devotion might deserve. I own to finding in this pathetic flattery, by which in moments of reflection I was not unmoved. At no time would I concede myself an arbiter, but to be regarded from such a point of view, even by this little man *in articulo amoris*, unsealed the fountains of my sympathy.

Indeed, I had little to say to Emmeline herself; it was Mrs. Adams and I who oftenest discussed the complication. She, indeed, took a great deal more account of Mr. Nathan than did her daughter. Emmeline, I fancied, brushed him away very easily; she had heavier preoccupations. It was hers to settle the great question as to why her art was so little persuasive, and hers, also, to reconcile herself to the breaking every day of bread which she had neither earned nor paid for. Plainly, Nathan had been too easy a conquest; he represented nothing she had tried for or cared to count; perhaps his persistence irritated her in its mockery of another and unachieved success. But Mrs. Adams took him quite seriously, gave him by turns the character of an intolerable nuisance, a romantic difficulty and a beast of prey; and in every capacity she made the very most of him. Whatever else he was, it was plain that to Mrs. Adams he was an immense solace and resource; he took the edge off a bitter situation, and let her see herself the protecting parent, full of diplomacy and precaution. I sometimes thought that she magni-

fied the necessity for these things. She talked of poor Mr. Nathan's fastening himself on, but no one could have been more easily shaken off. There was small difficulty in keeping him at arm's length; at a hint he became a mere speck on the horizon. He was always there, but always, as it were, in retreat; so much so that Mrs. Adams would sometimes look furtively around for him, and I saw her once or twice actually inveigle him into some sort of advance, for the pleasure of manœuvring its futility. As to Miss Adams, she now and then put a point upon her indifference by taking a turn with him on the piazza, at which Mrs. Adams would look elaborately perturbed, and say, "I wish Emmeline wouldn't do that."

The first time she said it, I put a question which caused her to explain why Mr. Nathan's addresses were impracticable. It was not, really, quite clear; it did not quite explain itself. The young man, to look at him, certainly came short of ideal standards, but so, for that matter, did the young lady, if one applied other tests. There was the difference of race, but was it not possible that this might be balanced in the eyes of a maiden counterpart of Tommy Tucker, who sang for his supper? When Mrs. Adams said she wished Emmeline "wouldn't do that," these considerations were vaguely present with me.

"After all," I said, "why not?"

"Look at him!" cried Mrs. Adams, apparently at a loss which reason to seize on first.

"He isn't pretty," I returned, "but he may be good."

"It isn't his appearance. He belongs to *them*." She nodded toward an opulent Hebraic group farther along the veranda.

"What else do you know about him?" I asked. "Does he come of decent people?"

"He comes of decent Jews; wholesale furriers in Chicago. Money? Money to burn!"

I looked at her, thoughtfully. "Money to burn," I repeated.

"Oh, well, that's slang; but the Nathans are a very rich family."

"Has he any education?" I asked.

"As far as that goes, he's a Harvard graduate. But you can't educate the Jew out of him."

"Oh, pray," I cried, "why should you wish to? I must tell you that two or three of the people I value most in this world are Jews, and it is precisely the Jew in them that I find most interesting and agreeable."

Mrs. Adams looked at me kindly. "I know, it's different in England," she said; "I guess *they're* different in your country. And, of course, you had Disraeli, the great Disraeli——"

"I've met charming Jews in your country," I insisted.

"Well, maybe you have. And I don't say but what, as a community, they're as good as we are, as charitable and more moral, if it comes to that. But over here the Christians stick somehow to the old notion of not having anything to do with them, more than they can help."

"You are so progressive, too, in some ways," I mused.

"We keep to ourselves and they keep to themselves," Mrs. Adams went on, earnestly. "Why, you've only got to look around you in this hotel. Do you ever see any mixing? Do you ever see a Jew and a Christian dancing together at the hops, or boating together, or even sitting together at the same table? Of course you don't. There's too many of them here this year," she added, lowering her voice, "too large a proportion. Next year it will be all Jews, and the year after it will be deserted. They hate having a place to themselves. Two or three hotels have been ruined that way, and I can see Mr. Humboldt's anxious about it. I believe he's given out that there isn't going to be room for any more. Emmeline," she called, as the pair turned near us, "I want my white wrap, dear. Will you go and get it for me?"

The young man laid upon Mrs. Adams a soft, impenetrable glance and lifted his hat, as Emmeline went lightly

upon her errand; then he strolled off in the direction of the lake. We watched his going. There was something in his marvelous capacity for receiving rebuffs—was it temperament, was it race, or was it just love?—that gave one an odd confidence in him. He walked with a student's slouch, his hands in his pockets, but invincible purpose expressed itself in his movements—might have been written in his footprints. I wondered if Mrs. Adams had the least idea of the sort of thing her prejudices would ultimately have to contend with.

"I'm pretty broad-minded," she said, as he disappeared; "I wouldn't pick out a Roman Catholic or a Unitarian for Emmeline to marry, but, if she wanted to, I wouldn't stand in the way, either—but a Jew!"

A fit of coughing overtook her, and I lost the sectarian alternative; but a gesture of the hands conveyed it more fully than words. In the midst of it Emmeline arrived with the shawl, in which she quickly and carefully wrapped her mother. "For once," she cried, with tender reproach, "you did want it!"

By this time I had begun to think that Mr. Humboldt had no bite at all. A whole week had gone by, presenting not only the ballad evening that could be depended upon to take, but an evening of recitations, an evening of parodies in the manner of the music-halls, a Sunday evening of sacred song. The performance was never any better or any worse; the form did not seem to matter. Miss Adams could make the tricks of Bernhardt as uninteresting as the score of Verdi, and to neither of them, on her lips, would Browning yield a line in mediocrity. She spread her own pale personality over everything; it was that, poor thing, which she offered nightly in ineffectual masquerade, with little airs of dignity and reserve that showed how painfully she guarded her treasure of self-respect. An understanding of the terms of the case seemed to have spread in the hotel, and it produced kindness; Miss Adams's audiences were thin, but she

was never quite without one. People said that, after all, the entertainer was doing her very best, and they listened as if this fact laid a compulsion on them.

Then—it was now the middle of July—arrivals began to multiply at Lake Onogo. The stages that met the morning and afternoon trains came back with four guests on a seat. Up out of the great cities they came, dusty and perspiring, to emerge from their rooms an hour later fresh and eager to discover the attractions of the place. The hotel was pervaded with new people, and there was no shyness in the way they took possession of it. The cottages were full, the annex was full, tents were put up in the grounds; it was said of Mr. Humboldt that he did not know which way to turn. When I met Emmeline Adams in the corridor, hurrying to her room and choking with sobs, I knew perfectly well which way he had turned.

I was on my way to the office to pay my weekly bill, and, as I went, I assumed the fierce implacability by which I had found it possible several times to approach the manager. Truculence he respected; a more ill-mannered scowl than his own would very nearly force a smile from him. I found him sitting there, corpulent, reflective, his lower lip pushed out and his hands hanging between his knees.

"The clerk's gone out," I addressed him; "if you can't keep a clerk on the spot, I've got to pay you."

The great man slanted an eye on the justice of this, and nodded. "Can't ask you to carry your bill around all day," he said, and stretched out his hand for it.

"I see the Adamses have got what—you call 'the sack,' in this elegant country," I said, with an offensive frown.

"Madam, for over a week now those ladies have been occupying a room in this hotel that is worth to the company that owns it exactly ten dollars a day. You know, and they know, and I know, that they give no sort of

equivalent. I'm not certain they don't do harm. We've had a quiet lot so far, but I expect a flash party from N' York to-morrow night that aren't taking any by-bye songs at all. S'long as there was plenty of accommodation I let it go on; but now the rush's begun I want their room. It's a matter of business."

"It isn't any of mine," I said, sulkily, "but I should think she could get up tableaux and charades and amuse the children. There isn't a soul to do anything for them in this hotel. At the Bennett House they've got a kindergarten and a gymnasium."

"No; I guess not. I've promised the room, so it's no use. That young Nathan"—Mr. Humboldt bit his pen and eyed me considerably—"I expect he'll be giving up his room, too, once they go."

"How do you know," I snapped, "that you aren't spoiling something?"

Mr. Humboldt looked at me quite good-naturedly. "Oh, no," he said; "you're all off there. Miss Emmeline isn't any star, but she don't have to take a thing like that."

"Perhaps she might do worse," I retorted.

"Oh, I suppose so; but I guess she don't think so." Mr. Humboldt turned to his books; I left him entering our transaction there.

The Adamses were to leave the following afternoon. A little plot came to me, by which the appearance of moral discomfiture should be visited upon the manager. The outcome of my little plot was a notice, pinned up on the dining-room door, that Miss Emmeline Adams would give on that date, by special request, a ballad evening, with two or three specified renderings. Among the new-comers was a member of the cabinet at Washington; he came with his party, and on his heels came all the new people and some of the old ones. Nor was it the least trouble to arrange with the hotel gardener for a sumptuous bouquet, which Mr. Secretary Beaumont was charmed to present, with the compliments of the guests of the hotel. It

made quite a little function and it went off very successfully. Emmeline caught a color out of it and looked absolutely pretty; Mrs. Adams perked and quirked on the piano-stool so happily that one sighed to think it should be for such a fleeting moment.

And the next day the stage left for the five o'clock train without the Adamses. As they had told me nothing about the manager's fiat, I could ask no questions and express no surprise. After dinner Emmeline played some little gay airs and the children danced. They should have been in bed, but they were American children and they had no ideas of that kind. They danced, with the most engaging grace, till half-past ten o'clock.

Next day there was a berry picnic for them, and Miss Adams took charge. The day after it rained, and some one said that Miss Adams and the children had retreated to the hay-loft. That evening Mrs. Adams told me in confidence that Miss Emmeline had consented, at Mr. Humboldt's entreaty, to do something for the children. "But you mustn't think it has anything to do with our arrangement here," she emphasized; "we both insisted upon *that*. Emmeline supports herself and me by her art only; the evenings will go on just the same. My daughter, however she may rank, isn't a nursery governess. She amuses the children for her own pleasure—she's perfect with children."

I thought I had done Mr. Humboldt serious injustice, and I found it difficult, for a day or so, to be rude enough to him to make sustained conversation possible.

The evenings did go on, but they were not quite the same. Sometimes an evening was boldly skipped, while Miss Adams was paddled about in the moonlight by one of the young men staying in the hotel. Mr. Nathan's cigar would then burn inscrutably in a dark corner of the veranda until her return. Sometimes the evenings shrank to the mere compass of a song or two. This tended immensely, of course, to the enlargement of the audience;

and the girl sang as if a cloud had been lifted from her—with spirit and spontaneity. But the thing that stood out was what her mother called her "perfection" with children. This, indeed, she had. The little things claimed her, captured her, swarmed about her. It was a triumph she had only to put out her hand to take. I thought I recognized a perception of this in the intelligent eyes of the little Jew, who took his chance oftenest, I noticed, with the children. She was certainly kindest to him at these times; once or twice she even let him help.

It was wonderful the way Emmeline and her mother expanded. One saw when they were buoyed up, even more than when they were cast down, how sweet their independence was. They were happy enough to coquette, Emmeline with the young men who taught her to golf, Mrs. Adams with the married ladies who rocked with her upon the veranda. I could not help saying one day to Mr. Humboldt that I was glad he had, after all, found a way to utilize Miss Adams's services. He looked at me with a kind of cynical compassion.

"You seem interested in those ladies," he said. "Can you keep a secret?"

"Why, yes," I replied, unguardedly.

"Well, whatever they are, they ain't dead-heads any longer. Their board's paid as regular as yours is."

It flashed upon me. "By——?"

"By the sheeny. You're on to it. It's too good to keep," he chuckled. "But you needn't give it away. They don't know it, o' course."

"But how wrong!" I exclaimed. "That poor girl——"

A shade of something like compunction passed over the manager's face. "It does seem playin' it kind of low on the girl," he said, "and old Mis' Adams, if she knew, she'd be as mad as a wet hen. But it's no use; I worked it all out with the Israelite—it can't be done any other way."

It was detestable, being in the secret, but I cannot deny that it did heighten the little comedy. It explained the

private satisfaction which enabled Mr. Nathan to go on living under the treatment he received, placing him at the same time still deeper in the Old Testament with his patience under affliction. He was easier to contemplate, with the guilty knowledge in mind, than the Adamses were. They presented a spectacle so trying to the senses of humor, of justice and of compassion that I often hesitated over the restriction of my adventitious promise to the manager, feeling that so inferior a bond might well break in order to end such a distressing situation. What most held me back from telling the Adamses was the reasonable prospect that they would never know. Least of all were they likely to hear of it from their despised benefactor. He had every tag and sign of common little men, but he had also his inheritance of sensibility. It was impossible not to think, too, with sympathy, of the money sense of his race and the subtle joy it must impart to his weekly handing over of bank-notes, a delicious thrill of benefit applied that would be lacking to the coarser Christian palm. Whether I spoke or held my peace, I felt myself in no way justified; but silence was simpler, so I kept it, biting my lip.

So passed July and August, one day much like another, but all beautiful, all vivid with pictures of the untrimmed woods set in the sweet and marvelous air. People stayed on with unusual persistence; by the first of September we were, as Mrs. Adams put it, "one large, large family." I should have said two, for the cleavage of the Jews and the Gentiles to themselves continued to the end. On both sides it was amiable and contained; there was never a sign in which one could read hostility, never a sign either in which one could read disintegration in the established order. The only atoms that could be called semi-detached and floating were Mr. Paul Nathan and myself, but he counting as a lover, and I as a foreigner, had little to say to the mass. A brilliant young Jewess I made especial friends

with threw upon the situation a light of history and philosophy for which I was indebted to her; but it was too much in the nature of theory to irradiate the Adamses or to be useful to this slight record. I noticed that, with all her broad-mindedness, she was inclined to cast the eye of pity upon Paul Nathan's plain infatuation. "Our men," she said to me, calmly, "have seldom the desire to marry out of their own race. They have always taken such care of us that we are generally strong and healthy, and I believe they think we make, in a sense, better wives. We *are* more domestic. Lightly as we have come to wear the bonds of our religion, how often do you hear of a Jewish divorce?"

Then the deer-slaughter began. I remember the splendid stag's head that adorned the office desk the day I went to pay my last bill. The clerk had shot the animal; it was his first victim and he was inordinately proud of it. I do not shoot; neither, it seemed, did Mrs. or Miss Adams, for we found ourselves departing by the same train. I was going only as far west as Buffalo, thence to find my own flag again in the north. To accept Mrs. Adams's kind invitation to her home in Detroit, whither Emmeline was hastening to take up her classes again, would have been giving, I felt, too great a license to my curiosity, and putting, perhaps, too great a strain upon my sympathy. I desired immensely to know the end of the queer little drama, but I was equally disposed to skip the rest of its development. I had an uncomfortable sense that I was already more involved than I had any sincere right to be, as far as the Adamses were concerned, and that I could not altogether depend upon the spectator's immunity, as far as Mr. Nathan was concerned. Once or twice already I had thought him on the brink of breaking it with an appeal; and that was something of which I stood in quite ridiculous dread, so had his wonderful reticence—up to date—gained upon my nerves.

We left him behind us, however,

when the stage bumped away with us over the corduroy road through the woods, to catch the west-bound train. Mrs. Adams indicated that it was rather a relief. Even as she spoke, his tragic mask gleamed out at us from a thicket of raspberry-bushes, and he raised his hat in farewell. Mother and daughter exchanged glances, and I thought Emmeline's bow kinder, if more distant, than her usual recognition. Mrs. Adams and I occupied the back seat; in that privacy I soon learned that the night before the poor young man had, as Mrs. Adams put it, "staked his all" upon a single question. Before that, she conveyed to me, in nods and undertones, they had always managed somehow to stave off the critical issue, but that last night he had simply asked for his opportunity, and Emmeline, to bring matters to a definite close, had given it to him. Now, Mrs. Adams sincerely hoped, they might look forward to a little peace; no doubt the poor fellow hadn't intended to spoil their Summer, but he had none the less effectually done so. It seemed to me that he had given their Summer—at all events Mrs. Adams's—its one light and leading; but what I expressed, of course, was the usual conviction that such things were very "painful"—an attempt, quite ineffectual, to dismiss the subject.

The train was three-quarters of an hour late, and we had the little pine-planked waiting-room to ourselves. The sap was green in it—it still smelled of the forest; and a dead fawn under one of the benches stained the floor with its innocent blood and gave a pang to the picture of crude invasion of which we all formed a part. The clerk in the ticket-office coughed incessantly; Mrs. Adams turned an experienced ear toward the sound, and I remember her saying, as she handed Emmeline her pocket-book to buy the tickets, that the case must be very advanced. "But it's the right air, it's the right air," she went on. "No doubt that's why he's here." She, poor lady, had benefited immensely by the right air; she had gained a stone in weight,

and almost, I thought, as I looked at her, placidly sitting there, an ounce or two in importance.

Emmeline came back, replacing the loose papers in their leather case. "What's this?" she asked. "You haven't opened it, mummy."

Apprehension shot into me, for I recognized the patriotic envelope of the hotel office. It might be anything, I told myself, but I did not like the look of it.

"Oh, that! It came from the office just as we were starting. Some little acknowledgment, I dare say, from Mr. Humboldt. Open it, dearie."

"Tear it up," I counseled, earnestly. "It's the hotel advertisement, with Mr. Humboldt's photograph at the top. It's not worth looking at."

But Emmeline had opened it, and I saw, as she unfolded the sheet, that it was not the hotel advertisement. She stood looking at it with a face of surprise and just a dash of apprehension. "Why, it's a bill!" she exclaimed.

"A bill?" cried Mrs. Adams and I together. "Oh, then," I added, with relief, "it's only a mistake."

"A bill," continued Emmeline, "from the hotel, for seventy-five dollars and seventy-five cents for the week ending September the third—that's to-day. It *must* be a mistake!"

Her eye, traveling down the items, was caught and fixed at the bottom. "Received payment with thanks," she repeated, word by word, with a frown of non-comprehension, "per—per"—she looked at me with inquiring bewilderment, then suddenly whitened and sat down. Her mother tore the paper from her hands.

"Per P. N.!" cried Mrs. Adams; and we all sat silent about the exploded thunderbolt.

"It *must* be some mis——"

"It's no mistake," said Emmeline, with a kind of quiet fierceness, "except handing it to mother—that was the mistake. Or was it—?" she demanded, with a flash—"or did he intend us to know—to—to pay us out that way?" Her face burned with anger, but her mouth quivered.

My indignation was prompt. "No, absolutely no," I said. "How can you suspect him of such a thing!" But Emmeline's eye dwelt, fascinated, upon one item in the bill. "Look," she said to her mother; "the hire of the room in which we gave our farewell tea—to which we didn't invite him! You would give that farewell tea! to 'the people who had been kind to us'! Oh," she cried, with the tears running down her cheeks, "oh, good God!"

"Emmeline! Emmeline!" Mrs. Adams deprecated, with a hand upon her daughter's arm. But the girl shook it off and presently began to pace the floor. She had dashed away her tears and taken hold of the thing; her face was a knot of concentration. Presently, she stopped in front of her mother. I can see her now, with her hands thrust into the pockets of her blue serge coat and the sharp lines of her knuckles showing through.

"I believe," she said, drily, "that this has been going on a long time. In the light of it I understand a good many things."

"He couldn't have dared," replied Mrs. Adams, weakly.

Emmeline took another turn and came again to a standstill. "He did dare. It began on the sixth of July, the day after Humboldt told us we'd have to go. Don't you remember how we wondered why he had changed his mind and what made him, all of a sudden, so polite? It was Paul Nathan's money. Mr. Nathan must have paid on our account—let me see"—she made a rapid calculation on the back of the bill—"five hundred and ninety—quite six hundred dollars. *Six hundred dollars!* Will you tell me where I am to get it?"

This, I saw, as she resumed her feverish pacing, was her whole pre-occupation. In the misery of the disclosure she hardly felt its blow to her vanity; for the moment she did not see herself humiliated and ridiculous before the standards of her art. She was wholly taken up with this impossible money obligation. I suppose my face expressed more compunction

than I knew, and perhaps my silence was indiscreet, for suddenly she shot upon me the sharpest scrutiny I have ever had to sustain.

"You knew about this!" she cried. I thought she would have taken me by the shoulders. "You have known about it from the beginning!"

"I am sure she hasn't, dearie," put in Mrs. Adams.

"And not told us one—single—word—about it!" went on Emmeline, keeping me firmly under her glance. "And you call yourself a friend of ours!"

"I may be a friend of his," I said, defensively. "And I can tell you this, dear Miss Adams: I am quite sure he never intended you to know. It was an absolute secret; I only found it out by—by accident, and I had to promise not to tell. The more unkindly you treated him, the more anxious he would be to keep it from you."

"You know nothing about him," she exclaimed, implacably.

"I know that," I said; "I am sure of that."

"I think, dearie, our friend is just as likely as not right," put in Mrs. Adams. "You know she has an eye for character."

Emmeline fixed me as if my eye for character were precisely my most objectionable feature. "What right," she demanded, "what earthly right had he to meddle with our affairs?"

Before that I was dumb. Who could make lawful defense of such a piracy of obligation?

"He only wanted to save you pain," I replied at last, weakly, "and—and inconvenience. He was trying to do it with the humble, obscure use of a few hundred dollars."

"His intentions were good, Emmeline," said her mother, thoughtfully, "and in a way, dear, I think it was nice of him."

Emmeline took two or three more turns and brought up squarely in front of the bench on which Mrs. Adams and I kept our dejected seats. She addressed me, and I saw at once that

my effort to occupy her with Mr. Nathan's motives had been, at least for the moment, vain.

"I am going to ask you," she said, "to lend me that money. Yes, mother, I am. You'll have to excuse me and you must lend it to me. You ought to—you can see for yourself that you ought to, not having prevented it when you might. Yes, mother, I know the train is coming—there's plenty of time. I want her to promise now, before we go on board, or I'll go back in the stage and get some arrangement out of Humboldt."

I will admit at once that it was inconvenient, and, being inconvenient, I rather suspected that it was unreasonable. I had not six hundred dollars to spare; I had not three—that is, to spare—without doing something I did not wish to do, or leaving something undone that I did wish to do. And it seemed, frankly, a great deal to pay for the indulgence I had permitted myself, the indulgence I have here described. It flashed upon me that Miss Adams's sense of proportion had somewhat failed her, and by the same flash I saw that everything had failed her, poor girl, except the sense of her own extremity. I cannot, therefore, claim it as even an amiable weakness by which I yielded and promised, in the set terms of her demand, before we boarded the smoking west-bound train, that she should have the money. She was very clear about my responsibility; it was really almost as if she levied damages upon me, collecting them with her own right hand, aided by my honest conscience; and practically all the gratitude was expressed by Mrs. Adams, from whom it came, however, with a blend of something that was not altogether approval. Long before I left the train Emmeline had worked out the plan upon which she intended to repay me by instalments. But when she explained it in detail, it was plain that her mother listened without enthusiasm. "It is a pity, after all," Mrs. Adams said to me, confidentially, under the roar of the express, "that

we came to know anything about it." I, too, thought so, and, apart from the irony of my own complication, I had a real pang for Paul Nathan when he should handle the avenging cheque.

Emmeline's first and only communication upon the subject was put into my hands the following February, in a rose garden of Palermo. Among the half-dozen letters the little Italian waiter brought me it was the only one in an unfamiliar hand, and I remember looking at it with the frown which life lends us, after a while, for unfamiliar hands. And I remember the relief with which I saw from the signature that it brought me, after all, only a reference to an agreeable Summer that was past. The reference was brief, the letter as a whole was brief; and this was the more characteristic, as it was a letter of apology. The first instalment of the six hundred dollars was due, and Miss Adams wrote to say that she could not pay it, owing to increased expenses connected with her mother's illness, which had lately passed through an alarming phase. Mrs. Adams was better and sent her love, and Emmeline knew I would understand.

I hope I did understand, and I hope I wrote in terms which could not fail to relieve the poor girl of at least that anxiety, but no more letters came from her, and other things were more present with me; and long before Palermo had faded into Piccadilly the little history I have written here faded into the Summer it was set in. How it flashed out again in all its primeval colors when, toward the end of the season, arrived the communication that seemed to cut me off from it with curtness and finality!

It came in a long, gray business envelope, bearing the American stamp, and under my careless fingers its enclosure dropped out first. This enclosure was a draft upon an Anglo-American banking house for the sum of six hundred dollars, and it was

signed by Paul Nathan. The story was all there, in the signature, and I gave myself the thrill of making it out from that before unfolding the sheet upon which Mr. Nathan, in the crisp terms of commerce, discharged, with thanks, his wife's obligation. In his handwriting, also, was the address on the newspaper, about a month old, in which I found marked the obituary notice of Mrs. Charlotte Adams.

Pinned inside this was a letter addressed to me from Mrs. Adams herself:

DEAR FRIEND:

Emmeline has written to tell you that I have been very ill lately, but she does not know how ill. The mischief is now far advanced in my remaining lung and I may at any time be called away. I know my dear Emmeline will have all your sympathy when this occurs, and I am not writing to ask it, but because I think I ought to let you know how completely my opinion of poor Mr. Nathan is changed. How careless are our judgments when in health and strength! I am now about to leave my dear daughter

alone and unprovided for in the world—my little pension dies with me—and she is far from strong. *Her art will never suffice!* On my death bed I intend to ask her to marry Mr. Nathan. She will not refuse her mother's last wish. She may convert him, but even if he remains a Jew he is a good, sterling man. I write to you because you were in our confidence last Summer, and I want to prevent any misunderstanding on your part should you hear of their marriage after I am gone. It will not be because I no longer influence her, but, on the contrary, at my express wish, and to enable me to pass away in peace. It is the best, the only course. Dear Emmeline could never entertain alone!

The story illustrates to me a remarkable case of a really triumphant American mother. Besides that, of course, it has its moral, from which, I think, with great confidence, we may pluck Mrs. Paul Nathan's happiness as well as her prosperity. The moral recites, with a certain candor, the only circumstances which offer the opportunity of permanent employment to an entertainer.



THE ENTREATY

YOU make me dream of gold asleep.
What strands await me, uncaressed?

What molten breaths, what heats ungessed
Are coiled for me, deep under deep.

*And all the moons that were in me wake breathlessly and beam to you;
And all the seas that stir in me throb up, like stars, and stream to you.*

You make me dream of white. No air
Was there upon your face or breast;
No storm, no hue, but only rest,

And grief went quiet as a prayer.

*Troy leapt—it sank, and must again, and night brood on the meres of it;
Fierce Babylon is dust again, its kisses with the tears of it.*

You make me dream of red. The room
Pulsed all about us, like a flame;
The hour! the voices—with them came
The crimson presages of doom.

*O sweet, I want the whole of you—that gold which is a part of you,
The dew which is the soul of you, the fire which is the heart of you!*

RIDGELY TORRENCE.

A LA PENSION

YOU—seated at the harp below—
 Play ballads borrowed out of France;
 I—leaning where the roof is low—
 I listen in a lazy trance.
 I have been reading—well, romance:
Un conte par Daudet, fresh and green
 With Provence people in a dance
 And poplar shadows in between.

You—trill of love; a *chansonnette*.
 Sung under windows in the street;
 I—dreaming over books, forget
 The smooth soprano, silver-sweet—
 Forget, and wander some retreat
 Of tangled terrace, broken bust;
 Of arches where the winds repeat
 A trouvère's carol o'er his dust.

Ah, well, we both are far away—
 (I in the attic, you below).
 We wander Provence, harvest day;
 Or Paris when the cafés glow.
 I know you not—you come and go—
 I meet you sometimes on the stair;
 A fellow-boarder, true—but, no!
 The world has settled our affair.

And yet—your voice, my book and—France!
 These somehow wish us to be friends;
 These whisper over old romance
 And fairy plots with happy ends.
 Ah, no! I babble—fate forbends.
 That *chanson*—that is all of you.
 Full better take what fortune sends
 Than part a slender purse in two.

HARRISON S. MORRIS.



AN OLD GRIEVANCE

SHE—I remember when the Bickertons were married; must be twenty years ago.
 HER HUSBAND—And they haven't forgiven each other yet!

LIFE

By Madison Cawein

PESSIMIST

THERE is never a thing we dream or do
But was dreamed and done in the ages gone;
Everything's old; there is naught that is new,
And so it will be while the world goes on.

The thoughts we think have been thought before;
The deeds we do have long been done;
We pride ourselves on our love and lore
And both are as old as the moon and sun.

We strive and struggle and swink and sweat,
And the end for each is one and the same;
Time and the sun and the frost and wet
Will wear from its pillar the greatest name.

No answer comes for our prayer or curse,
No word replies though we shriek in air;
Ever the taciturn universe
Stretches unchanged for our curse or prayer.

With our mind's small light in the dark we crawl,
Glow-worm glimmers that creep about,
Till the Power that shaped us, over us all
Poises His foot and treads us out.

Unasked, He fashions us out of clay,
A little water, a little dust,
And then in our holes He thrusts us away,
With never a word, to rot and rust.

'Tis a sorry play with a sorry plot,
This life of hate and of lust and pain,
Where we play our parts and are soon forgot,
And all that we do is done in vain.

OPTIMIST

There is never a dream but it shall come true,
And never a deed but was wrought by plan;
And life is filled with the strange and new,
And ever has been since the world began.

THE SMART SET

As mind develops and soul matures,
 These two shall parent Earth's mightier acts;
 Love is a fact and 'tis Love endures
 Though the world make wreck of all other facts.

Through thought alone shall our Age obtain
 Above the Ages gone before;
 The tribes of sloth, of brawn, not brain,
 Are the tribes that perish, are known no more.

Within ourselves is a voice of Awe,
 And a hand that points to Balanced Scales;
 The one is Love and the other Law,
 And their presence alone it is avails.

For every shadow about our way
 There is a glory of moon and sun;
 But the hope within us hath more of ray
 Than the light of the sun and the moon in one.

Behind all being a purpose lies,
 Undeviating as God hath willed;
 And he alone it is who dies
 Who leaves that purpose unfulfilled.

Life is an epic the Master sings,
 Whose theme is man and whose music, soul,
 Where each is a word in the Song of Things,
 That shall roll on while the ages roll.



A SELLER

PLAYWRIGHT—I have here a German tragedy.

MANAGER—Don't want it!

PLAYWRIGHT—I was about to add, translated, adapted, dramatized, condensed, arranged and set to rag-time by myself.

MANAGER—I'll take it, sir; pray name your own terms.



UNFORTUNATE

CLERK—Great Scott! I gave that man who was in here five minutes ago some of this poison by mistake!

DRUGGIST—How careless you are! That's the most expensive poison we've got in the shop.

THE DESCENT OF MAN

By Douglas Story

IT was the hour of the half-light—the hour when man's mind roams indiscriminately between thoughts of the immensity of the cosmos and the need of dressing for dinner. Major the Honorable Chester Methuen settled himself more comfortably into the padded luxury of his club chair and idly eyed the last of the homeward procession from the Park. It was early May, and the victorias still glistened with their fresh Spring varnish.

From his hand dangled a mailed copy of the *Morning Post*, and in fancy he wandered eastward to the corner of that other Park his education had taught him was the hub of the social universe. What did he here, gazing out at a triangle bounded by overgrown hotels and the exotic château of a Vanderbilt? Methuen frowned as he put the question, but smiled as the conviction was forced upon him that the answer was the eternal one—*cherchez la femme*.

It was true he had crossed the Atlantic, had given up his Winter's hunting, had allowed his yeomanry troop to go the second time to South Africa without him, for the sake of a woman, for a democratic chit of a girl who was as unattainable that evening as she had been when first he met her at Lady Courtenay's, eight months before. He turned angrily to the newspaper in his hand. An observant servant turned on the electric light above his head, and there, displayed before him, was the immediate cause of his irritation.

The Earl and Countess of Cliveden have arrived in town for the season.

That meant brave doings in Belgrave Square, because neither his brother's income nor his inclination was of the kind that stints hospitality. Methuen growled an anathema and tore the wrapper from another paper on his knee. It was the *World*, and he glanced lazily over its columns. Everybody he knew, and many he had forgotten, were hastening to London. Town houses, that for a generation had blinked near-sightedly through shaded windows, had shaken the scales from their eyes and were smiling gladly out upon the world again. Town was blithe with the laughter of girls, gay with the smiles of fair women; and he sat alone in New York, love-sick and forlorn!

Even the *World* had something to say of his desertion:

Of the young men who have not gone to the war and yet are absent this season the most notable is the Honorable Chester Methuen, brother of the Earl of Cliveden. The heir of his mother, he is one of the most eligible of present-day Englishmen, yet has he mysteriously withdrawn himself westward, and for the last three months has lived a hermit's life in America. His speedy return is ardently desired by a large circle of friends in Mayfair.

"Damn their desires!" muttered Methuen, irritably, as he threw the paper from him. "One would think I was a scratched favorite for the Derby or a racing yacht out of commission."

"Hello, Methuen, got *le vin triste*? You look as if L. & N.'s had dropped ten points. What's the matter?"

He was a well-groomed man, fresh from Fifth avenue, who hailed him. Methuen grunted in reply, but made

no articulate answer. Instead, he hit the bell a sharp rap and turned to his interrogator.

"Have a cocktail? It's the one good thing that has come out of this disgustingly new world of yours—and even it was stolen from the Phoenicians."

The New Yorker laughed, and joined in the order for Martinis.

"My dear Methuen, there is no new world, but there are many good things in this old one of ours. Just look out there and tell me if you know anywhere—out of Budapest—such a throng of good-looking women?"

"Oh, yes; good enough to look upon, but ashes upon the lips when you come to taste of them."

"*Noli os tangere*, then—it's your family motto, isn't it?"

The Englishman started and frowned. "With all due deference to the Latin of my ancestors and the heraldry of his grace the earl marshal, it is—but that's just what I detest about you Americans. When a Britisher happens among you, you at once measure him by Burke, con over his clubs and his country places, commit to memory his female relations and get a working idea of his coat of arms. Good God, why can't you take a man for himself—so long as he pays his hotel bills and doesn't use a New York tailor? I tell you, I know quite respectable people at home who haven't the dimmest idea of the difference between a field azure and a countercharged she-dragon; but I don't know one woman in America who can't rattle off my style and arms as though she were a railway porter at a junction."

"Well, my dear sir, it's all evidence of education—and the enterprise of the publishers of peerages. Just look at the intelligence of our women, at their grasp of affairs! Just think for a moment of the difference between a New York dinner-table and one in London, and tell me which is on the higher plane?"

"Higher plane be damned! Your American woman knows less of more

things than any other human being living. You take a woman in to dinner—she rhapsodizes over Fritz Kreisler's high C, over Marcius Symons's tone allegories, over Maeterlinck's mysteries and the soul-destroying effect of Christian Science, before you've swallowed your soup. But she doesn't know the alphabet of art any more than she understands the elements of religion. She's got the acquisitive genius of the magpie with the blatant volubility of the parrot. I tell you, I'm tired of the American woman and all her ways!"

"May I tell that to Margaret Hamilton?"

Methuen flushed and his hands clenched in anger. His voice was very cold and deliberate as he replied: "Pardon me, I never apply general laws to individual cases. Thank God, even in America there are exceptions to every rule."

The other realized it were better to change the conversation, so he rose, glanced at the clock, and remarked: "Well, I'm off to dress. Good-bye, Methuen. Where are you dining to-night?"

"Sherry's."

"So am I. See you later?"

Methuen followed him out to the Avenue and cursed himself for a fool for his irritation. Education, after all, counted for little when generations of self-repression could not reconcile him to the presence of a woman's name upon another's lips. He realized that something in the high-bred chivalry of his nature shrank from the extreme candor of the modern pose. Man of the world, he was yet sentimentalist enough to hold his heart lock-fast, to deem his love for a woman a sacred trust, inviolable.

On his way down the Avenue he formed a resolution. He would demand an answer from Miss Hamilton and by it would he guide his steps—to London and the season, or to Newport and his bride-elect.

Other men than Methuen would have felt less of hesitation in putting their claims to the test. Worshipped

at Hurlingham and Ranelagh as a polo-player, he was known throughout the shires as a daredevil rider to hounds. He had played cricket for his school and his county, and, in a safe of his London bankers', were the D. S. O. he had won under Kitchener in the River Campaign and the C. B. his sovereign had given him for his work with the first contingent in South Africa. It is true he had no title, but he had youth and health and fortune. His father had been an earl and his mother a countess, as were his brother and sister-in-law to-day. All of these he had to his credit; but Chester Methuen loved too well to believe that aught but the man within him would avail much with Margaret Hamilton. Toward that personality he bore less of good will than did the world at large.

That night at dinner he saw, from his seat at the right of his hostess, Margaret Hamilton mightily amused by the talk of the man from the club, and cursed himself still more for the naïveté of his generalizations. His own table found him heavy and distraught.

"I see the London *World* bemoans your absence, Major Methuen," remarked his hostess, seeking to rouse him.

"I hate public lamentations, Mrs. Mostyn, and I loathe the society press. When old women controlled the world of gossip they made mischief; now the newspapers invent it."

"True; but we don't believe it, and, besides, only our maids read it."

"I admit that; but then your maids retail it to you again while they're busy with your hair, or your manicure magnifies it."

Mrs. Mostyn shrugged her shapely shoulders and smiled. "My dear major, it's all a sign of the times. The troubadours have passed, and their place has been taken by *chic* manicures and anecdotal *masseuses*. What would you? They're less metrical, but quite as imaginative as any minstrel of the Middle Ages. Besides, they've got so much better opportunity of gauging what we really wish to know than those picturesque tat-

tlers with the clam shells in their hats ever had! Now, we've all been dying to know what brought you over here, and only this afternoon my nail-woman whispered something to me about your taste in hair. She says you like it *Du Barry*. Are you very hard hit, major?" She leaned toward him as though to search out his heart.

"Could I have lived three months with a mortal wound and yet have escaped the notice of your manicure?"

"It's possible. Since Cupid exchanged his bow and arrows for a Mauser pistol a man may walk about for months with a bullet in his heart and not know it. Moreover, you're distinctly flagging. You're growing absolutely stupid."

"Change of climate and too many dinners—sort of fatty degeneration of the intellect."

"Strange, isn't it, that you aristocrats credit yourselves with intellects nowadays and are not ashamed?"

"I suppose it's because we live by them."

Mrs. Mostyn's eyebrows rose a full half-inch. "Heavens, major! And your brother's the seventeenth Earl of Cliveden?"

"He's the busiest stock-broker in Throgmorton street, and his countess has a ready-made hat-store somewhere off Oxford street."

"*Himmel!* And you still account yourself an aristocrat? Really, one can say the rudest things nowadays; isn't it delightful?"

"Not at all. But you see, Mrs. Mostyn, aristocrats are like poets—they're born, not made. You Americans have forgotten that."

"H'm! We're trying to live up to it. I never heard, though, that stock-brokers were products of nature. Hasn't your brother a partner or something?"

"Yes; Mucklewaim—the son of my father's Scotch gardener. The firm is 'Mucklewaim & Methuen.'"

"Sounds like a minstrel combination! Is Mr. Mu-Mu-*quel-qu'un* the brains of the co-partnery?"

"No; he keeps the books and signs the cheques. My brother does the thinking."

"Bless my soul! Thank you, major; a little brandy—I felt giddy for the moment. Let us talk of something less revolutionary, please. By the way, what *did* bring you to America?"

"The study of democracy."

"Good heavens! and you're wasting your time in the United States! Really, major, you do little credit to our intelligence. However," as she dipped her fingers in the water, "we can forgive you many things for the sweet pleasure of your company. Shall we go?"

As they passed the place at which Miss Hamilton sat he heard her remark: "No, you can no more carve the élite out of a family tree than you can mould it out of dollar bills. I have no use for coronets that are merely brewers' trade-marks. Give me the man the gods father, untarnished with trade, unsullied with servitude, and I'll acclaim him noble."

Methuen heard and marked the flash of her eye, the haughty poise of her head in the table light. He wondered what answer might await him on the morrow, and, wondering, passed outward to his auto-Victoria.

II

THE course was beautiful in the pale Spring morning, delicate and inviting. Margaret Hamilton emphasized its fragile charm by the radiance of her beauty. Her coloring was Autumnal, of the poppy rather than of the primrose, yet was she no wise at feud with the landscape. She did not blend with the simple whites and tender greens, but she stood out from them and dominated them, triumphant. The rich coils of her russet hair held the attention, the gentle birches and alders yielding her place. She seemed a very Cleopatra unsoftened yet by Antony.

Chester Methuen was a goodly man on a golf-course, broad-shouldered,

fine-flanked, spare-ankled, lithe and muscular. He paired well with Margaret, although his fair complexion left to her the predominance in the color scheme.

It was not till they had reached the far green that their conversation veered from the topical to the personal. Methuen was determined to redeem his vow, to put his fortunes to the test. Margaret was sublimely innocent, intensely golfish.

Methuen opened with a characteristic generalization: "American women grace a golf-course; English women never replace the Turf."

"You mean—in their husband's affections?"

"Not necessarily—some husbands have no affections. I mean one has to come to America to find the graceful woman—graceful on the ball floor and on the teeing ground. Grace, with us, went out with the minuet, and we never took to the two-step—but that's not what I started to say. I'm going home to England."

Margaret was leisurely building a tee to her pleasure; Chester's remark sounded inane, plebeian. She glanced up at him from the platform.

"Really? Not before we finish the round, I hope?"

Methuen looked down at her where she crouched like a lioness on some tawny Abyssinian desert. His face was firm of a set purpose.

"Miss Hamilton, I love you. I have loved you ever since I met you in London last season. I came to America to claim you. I ask you now whether you will marry me."

Margaret knelt beside her ball, letting the gray sand trickle noiselessly through her fingers, the while he spoke to her. When Methuen asked her to marry him she started as though he had lashed her; her hand closed tight on the moiety of sand remaining, her lips clenched and her jade eyes gleamed balefully. Methuen marveled at her resemblance to the lioness he had pictured her.

She rose slowly and deliberately and faced him.

"Sir, the tempo of your language smacks rather of the parade ground than of romance. Still, as I understand you, you are making love to me?"

"I am asking you to be my wife."

"Then, sir, I deem your request an insult. Fore!"

Her caddie sprang upright on the knoll where he had lain sunning himself, startled out of his somnolence by the imperiousness of her summons. Methuen bent forward as she addressed the ball. There was no formality about his speech or his actions now. He gripped her wrists and held her while the words hissed out from him.

"For God's sake, Margaret, stop! Think what this means to me—to us both. I love you, I tell you—love you. When I met you in London I thought you the most beautiful creature I had ever seen. When I crossed the ocean to join you the engines sang, night and day, 'Mar-gar-et! Mar-gar-et!' Here, in New York, for three months I have dined and danced and driven in the Park to be near you. I have thought of no other woman since our first meeting, save you—and now you call my offer of marriage an insult! Why?"

His voice vibrated with the intensity of his passion, but Margaret remained stolid, emotionless. When he paused for reply she spoke quietly, evenly.

"Major Methuen, you hurt my wrists."

Chester made no movement to alter his grip. He repeated his query.

"Why?" The teeth met in her lower lip. It was the old contest of will—the eternal struggle between male and female. He went on: "I love you. In my own land I have family and position. I have a fortune that even Wall street cannot sneer at. I am but thirty-two, and there is nothing in my past need shun the light of day. Why, Margaret, why?"

At the sudden mockery of her answer he staggered: "I am determined not to ally myself with trade. It's the curse of our modern life—necessary, perhaps, yet a curse, as work is.

It has killed chivalry, gallantry, romance. I understand certain members of your family are engaged in trade. Well, I shall never marry any one associated with it, or with them. I shall have no cash-registered aristocrat for husband! I demand a peer of Bayard and du Guesclin, otherwise do I remain a maid and a democrat!"

She spoke as tragedy queens were wont to speak, then turned away from the tee and strolled over to a wind-blown bush and seated herself there. Chester gazed blankly after her, then followed, groping as a blind man might. She was marvelously beautiful embowered in lilac, and Methuen's heart yearned to her.

"Margaret," he moaned, and his voice was full of an infinite despair, "Margaret, is this some grizzly jest? Am I so little to you, that you can see in my protestation only an object for laughter, a butt for ridicule? God, girl, do you know what it means to a man to lay his heart bare before you, to expose his very soul to you?" Methuen's voice was strong and hard now, the voice of a man resentful. Margaret sat very still, rhythmically tapping the toe of her tiny tanned shoe with the head of her driver.

"I beg your pardon, Major Methuen; I merely said I was determined not to marry into a family engaged in trade."

"But, heavens! my father was the sixteenth Earl of Cliveden! Ever since the Norman landed my people have been law-makers and leaders in war. What on earth do you mean?"

"I mean nothing against the dead—let them rest in Westminster Abbey or Cliveden Cathedral. The past is—the past. I am dealing with the present. Isn't your brother a stock-broker and your sister-in-law a maker of impossible straw hats? I hate trade, I detest traders—I long for the chivalry, the sentiment, the national pride that of old made men die for their country. You cannot find that across a counter."

The tension on Methuen's face broke and a smile swept over it, a happy,

boyish smile. Margaret marked the ripple of his laugh and realized his mouth was very appetizing. The beat of the driver upon her shoe slackened off into a contemplative *rallentando*. Her head drooped for the first time that morning.

"What are you laughing at?" Her mouth was pouting now.

"At the eternal feminine and her ineradicable inconsistency. You are a patriot, are you not?"

"I am an American."

"Same thing! Well, Margaret, listen to me while I explain the mystery of my brother's trade relations." He was sitting on the grassy bank beside her, now, and the girl's tattoo had lapsed into silence. She looked up for a moment with the laughter lighting her eyes.

"My interest concerns *your* trade relations, not your brother's. Are there others?"

"Sit still, and listen! Like you, my brother is a patriot—it's a family failing; my great-grandfather lost his head through it—he has been greatly concerned with the development of American trade, as have all Englishmen, and he has set himself to curb it. Now, in the old days, my people did their part in building up an Empire—and they did it not so badly, considering the meager little island they started out with; so they were prime ministers in England, viceroys in India, commanders-in-chief in Canada—and the result is the British Empire."

Margaret's hand stole into Chester's and rested there.

"Well, to-day, these things are done by such men as Chamberlain and Kitchener and those fellows—they don't need us any longer as Empire managers; the work's easy now. So

my brother and the best of the nobility are setting themselves to fight you in trade—it's the modern battlefield and England's chivalry is needed where her peril is greatest. Consequently, the Earl of Cliveden sells Union Pacifics, and the countess designs straw hats for the million. *Noblesse oblige, ma chérie*, now as heretofore."

He drew the girl's yielding body over to him and kissed her long and tenderly. The driver dropped from her hand and a soft, warm arm stole round his neck.

"Oh, Chester!" she murmured into his neck, "I knew it must be all right; but why, dear heart, have you waited so long to tell me? We might have been so happy."

When they rose to go, the caddie was dancing a war-dance on the knoll. Margaret blushed, and Methuen threw a golf-ball at him. A gentle, restraining hand stretched out to the enraged Englishman.

"And please, Chester, will you promise never again to say that an American woman knows less of more things than any other being?"

The lioness was pleading now, Cleopatra hungering for her Antony.

"Oh, ho!" laughed Methuen. "That's where the shoe pinches! No, child; I used to think the road to an American woman's love was *via* her throat by virtue of candies, but now I know it rests upon her lips, and—she knows more of one thing than any other woman living!"

The screen of lilac was a sadly inefficient protection against an experienced caddie's gimlet eyes. But two people were happy, and the world has greater need of happiness than lovers of covert.



HOW THEY ARE KEPT

MISS DE STYLE—He said I was a little flower that he intended to keep.
MISS GUNBUSTA—I noticed him pressing you.

EARTH'S WEARIEST

By Theodosia Garrison

'T WAS God in heaven who spake to Death
Who stood beside His knee,
"Oh, lover of all men that live,
Whose arms clasp land and sea,
Find thou on earth the weariest soul
And bear it swift to me."

It was God's messenger who went
Swift-footed on his way;
Like flame he crossed the rim of night,
Like shadow crossed the day,
And as he passed the glad dead smiled
As soothed children may.

It was God's messenger who sped
Like blown wind through the spheres,
Across the little paths of earth,
With feet that no man hears.
He reached the portal of that place
That is the House of Tears.

It was God's messenger who stood
And watched with pitying eyes
The burning tears of those who wept,
Who heard the broken sighs
Of men who cried aloud their griefs
And mourned their miseries.

It was God's messenger who spake:
"Not theirs the gift I bring.
Behold, the sorrow that is said
Becomes a little thing;
And there is solace in man's tears
That is God's comforting."

It was God's messenger who went
The little ways of earth.
The red moon smouldered in the clouds
Like fire upon a hearth,
And lo! he came unto that place
That is the House of Mirth.

THE SMART SET

It was God's messenger who heard
 The laughter and the cheer,
 The wine was red upon the board,
 The lights burned high and clear,
 And one laugh rang above the rest
 That joyed men's hearts to hear.

It was God's messenger who heard
 One voice above the rest—
 She who was gayest in the song
 And quickest with the jest,
 And lo! he saw the broken heart
 That ached within her breast.

It was God's messenger who bent
 And touched her tenderly;
 "Great is the anguish of a smile
 That shows where grief should be,
 And awful are the unshed tears
 That never man may see."

It was God's messenger who spake
 The word that no man saith;
 It was the poor soul in his arms
 That sailed in her last breath,
 "Strove I not well—how didst thou know
 I was so weary, Death?"



THE MAIN QUESTION

BRAMBLE—My wife and I were playing ping-pong last night, when the ball
 flew into a gas flame and exploded, set fire to the window curtains and
 nearly burned the house down.

THORNE—Who won the game?



GOOD ADVICE

HE—I can't seem to stick to anything.

SHE—Try sitting on fly-paper.



A HENPECKED HUSBAND

HEWITT—Do you believe in the equality of the sexes?

JEWETT—I'd like to, but my wife won't let me.

THE VIRTUOSITY OF MR. BENJAMIN

By Fletcher Cowan

MR. BENJAMIN did not take up the piano until the age of sixty, yet at sixty-one he became the most remarkable virtuoso of his time. One year, in which not only to attain but transcend the skill that had demanded of others the application of a lifetime—this was the phenomenon that held the world spellbound and made the critics reel agliss.

It all started in a department-store. Mrs. Benjamin wished to purchase some hangings for the drawing-room, and, much against his will, took Mr. Benjamin with her, to confer with him so that she might select the opposite of whatever happened to please him.

Having achieved her purpose, she swept off to the silk-department, leaving Mr. Benjamin, as usual, to go home alone. That day, however, it happened that her husband was in a leisurely mood, so he took to wandering about the upholstery and furniture sections of the place, with much the same air of inconsequence that characterized his morning constitutional in the Park. Somehow, the glamour of the great department-store had taken hold of him. Home-staying in his habits, his opportunities for keeping in touch with the gigantic strides of modern business came seldom, and, on this particular day, he felt like making more of the occasion.

Suddenly, he found himself strolling through a suite of sumptuously furnished rooms. He was in a corner flat on Riverside Drive, and outside the windows the snow was falling. Every modern luxury was contained

in the apartments: electric lights, hardwood floors, rugs, hangings, bric-à-brac and a real bathtub, with running water.

He sat down on a divan and studied the mimic scene with pleasurable wonderment, as though he were in a theatre. His only critical look was directed at the draperies.

"I like the ones I've just selected better," he murmured. Then he sighed. "Ah! how will Miranda ever get on without me! A woman is so dependent on the judgment of a man." He looked around again. "How charmingly homelike!" he thought, and hearing a piano playing somewhere, he called an attendant and asked: "Is there an adjacent flat?"

"No, sir; the operator is giving his morning recital on the diapasonola in the lyrium, yonder."

Mr. Benjamin at once gravitated toward the lyrium. The selection was from "Parsifal." The neutral-hued concert chamber was illuminated softly with opalescent lights. Many people were there, listening reverentially to the music and holding packages which varied in the character of their proportions all the way from a delft clock down to a yard of drab waist-lining. A rather businesslike young man was sitting before the instrument. Music, apparently, came so naturally to him that he was able to produce it without palpable effort. He might have been the conductor of a trolley car, so obviously did he seem to sweep through the *schema* of it all. But the music was great and everybody seemed to feel it so, and most of all Mr. Benjamin. At the close of the selection every one

rose and pressed forward toward the instrument. Earnest questions were asked of the operator.

"Do you mean to say that you have not been playing on the real piano?"

"I have been playing on the real piano, madam, but indirectly, through an agency," was the reply. "The diapasonola is a mechanical device, attached to the piano proper. You see, it may be placed or pulled away at pleasure. This perforated paper-roll is the music-sheet, which is set in, so. On operating the foot-board, the music at once begins. An intricate series of wind-valves are set in motion and these act on a series of felt hammers, which strike the keys of the piano proper, just as the human fingers would."

"How wonderful! And can anybody play it?"

"A child can play it. A fly could, if its muscular gear were strong enough."

"Then no skill at all is necessary?"

"Without understanding a single note of music, you can play the most intricate masterpieces with the diapasonola. Therefore, literally, no technical skill is necessary. But the remarkable point is that musical skill is by no means debarred. The diapasonola has a technique of its own—the technique of expression—which gives every player the opportunity of exercising his own individuality. Do you see this row of push-buttons here, marked *allegro*, *moderato*, *adagio*, and so forth? Do you see this switch and its dial arc, with measurements from *pianissimo* to *forte*, and the pedal lever? All these things permit you to regulate the tempo and the volume of the music you are playing, so that you may give it the color of your own individual feeling."

"What was the last number that you played, sir?"

"Parsifal."

"Does the instrument play coon-songs just as well?"

"Just as well," and the operator obligingly took out the Wagner music and did a delicate *morceau* in synco-

pated rag-time. Mr. Benjamin stood listening like one entranced.

At the conclusion of the cotton-field sonata, the operator rose and said in a very clear, across-the-hall tone:

"Ladies and gentlemen, the preliminary illustrations with the diapasonola being finished, we now come to the regular morning lecture. The subject to-day will be 'How to Listen to the Music of the Future.' Before the lecture there will be an intermission of ten minutes, during which visitors are free to further investigate the diapasonola, or regale themselves at the samovar in the palm-room."

Most of the audience went immediately to the palm-room. Mr. Benjamin approached the operator.

"Do you mean to tell me that I can play those things as you did?" he asked.

"Yes, sir."

Mr. Benjamin looked about him timidly. The concert-chamber was almost deserted. He sat down and the operator started him off on a Liszt Hungarian rhapsody.

As the first notes came bounding forth, Mr. Benjamin's eyes began to gleam at the thought that the harmonies he heard were actually being produced by himself, who had never before touched a piano in his life. As the music went on and its dash and *bizarrierie* became intensified, he became positively excited and finally, stopping short, stood up and cried:

"I'll take one of these!"

The operator immediately produced his order-pad. "Name, please? Where delivered? Oak or rose-wood? You leave the selection of the music-rolls to us? Have you an account here? Thanks. Delivery on Wednesday."

Mr. Benjamin lingered for a moment, with the nervous feeling of a man who had done something that was beyond the empire of his own volition.

"Have you lost anything, sir?" asked the operator, seeing him feeling absently in his pockets.

"My handkerchief. Oh, here it is! That exercise worked me up consider-

ably," said Mr. Benjamin, as he wiped his face.

"You have a musical temperament, sir," observed the operator, as he escorted him toward the elevator.

II

MR. BENJAMIN had intended the instrument as a birthday surprise for his wife. He had once spent a fortune on the musical education of an only daughter, feeling what a source of delight it would be, when he and Miranda were older, to have their gifted child sit and play for them of evenings. But he had not figured on the human accident of things. Edith married and played her music for another man. Mr. Benjamin reasoned, therefore, that the diapasonola would bring himself and his wife some compensation for the pleasure that had been wrested from them by the force of circumstances.

The instrument was brought into the house successfully, while Mrs. Benjamin was absent at an afternoon tea. The man, sent with it, attached it to the piano, tested it and left. But Mr. Benjamin became so restless awaiting the return of his wife that he determined to try it. He selected from the music-rolls the overture to "Zampa," took his seat on the stool, inserted it and started off. Soon he found himself making breaks in the music, due to his halting pressure on the foot-board. Then he became aware that he was gradually receding from the instrument. The foot-work was pushing him in the direction of the street. The stool gathered up the rug; the rug gathered up a tabouret holding an exquisite bit of Satsuma. There was a fall in Satsuma, and Mr. Benjamin, gathering up the pieces, stowed them behind the piano, murmuring, "Servants are so careless!" Then he respread the rug and started in again to master the technique of physical equipoise, this time holding on to the instrument with both hands. For a while the

whole thing looked like a dry shipwreck, the musical instrument being the raft and Mr. Benjamin the cast-away, minus the rope-lashing. At last, however, the power of man conquered and, as soon as Mr. Benjamin was able to confine himself and the instrument to playing in one room, he took up music, *per se*. After studying the labels of all the music-rolls, he selected Rubenstein's "Kammenoi-Ostrow." The choice was a felicitous one. The delicate *moderato* opening began at once to intoxicate him and he felt afloat among the clouds of fantasy, a feeling he had never known before. Concluding this, he next determined to test the solidity of the firmament with the *vorspiel* to the "Flying Dutchman." He opened splendidly, and the fact that he, who had never touched a piano before, was able to produce such a whirlwind of consecutive tone-thunder almost carried him out of himself and left him panting at the incomprehensibility of the thing. The strain was nervous as well as physical. He rose and lighted a cigar. Smoking with rapid puffs, he paced up and down the room, excitedly.

"Is it possible?" he cried. "Am I, after all, a genius? It must be. I have heard music played before, but never have I heard it played as I have played it. They are right in every claim they make about this instrument. Though it be a mechanical contrivance, the player can still assert his individuality through it; can even assert it all the more."

He remembered Emerson's defense of Shakespeare against the charge of having appropriated the subject matter of his plays. Emerson had argued well when he contended that Shakespeare's thefts of theme had been a blessing for mankind. They had left his genius free for the treatment of the theme, instead of hampering him with its invention. So with music; an instrument like the diapasonola would do away with its exaction of a lifetime's drudgery in finger-work and leave the soul of man free to consider its

spiritual interpretation. A new age was dawning, an age which had opened with the poetization of the mechanical. Musical study would become obsolete or relegated to the ranks of clerical work, along with type-writing. Of course, composers would always be necessary, until a machine was invented to supplant them; and, in the boundlessness of his optimism, Mr. Benjamin considered this by no means impossible.

Having by this time recovered sufficiently from the dynamics of Wagner, Mr. Benjamin took up the "Peer Gynt" suite of Grieg, and was playing down into the pedaldom of the "Hall of the Mountain King," when his wife entered.

"Joseph!" she cried. "Have you taken leave of your senses?"

"Don't be precipitate in your conclusions, my dear," answered Mr. Benjamin. "There is a surprise in store for you on your birthday—the revelation of a genius in your husband that you never dreamed of, which this instrument has awakened from its dormancy!"

III

MR. BENJAMIN possessed one of the most important attributes of genius—faith in himself. That evening he played for his wife with an instantaneous mastery of the instrument that fascinated her. She scarcely heard the music. What held her interest was the forceful manner in which her hitherto impersonal husband asserted himself in a field that had been utterly strange to him.

"What will Edith say when she hears you, dear?" she said.

He did not answer, absorbed as he was in the fervor of reeling off a Chopin nocturne. When he arose, it was like one who has gone through some great emotional effort; and, crossing the room, he looked at himself in the mirror.

"I spoke to you, Joseph," observed his wife, remindingly.

"Yes; I think I heard you, dear. But never be surprised if I do not im-

mediately answer you. The musical nature has its peculiarities."

Mr. Benjamin soon began to give his time entirely to music. He sometimes played as late as three o'clock in the morning, unaware of the unseasonableness of the hour, until the tenants of the apartment-house made it known to him through the medium of the proprietor. The oblivious rhapsodist received the hint with scorn.

"Miranda," he said, "my music is above these people; I am playing over their heads."

"That's just what they are complaining about," said Mrs. Benjamin.

"You do not understand. As some one has said, 'there is a certain enormity of genius that at times makes a man invisible to his contemporaries!'"

"But, though you may be invisible to them, Joseph, you are distinctly audible, I can assure you."

"That is the musical artist's only consolation. If he can make himself heard, he will in time make himself felt."

That Mr. Benjamin was making himself felt soon became evident. The request courteous soon gave way to the demand imperative. The proprietor said, speaking for his tenants, that although he acknowledged the abstract charm of music and its power as a factor in the soothing of savage beasts, he drew the line when music became so retroactive in its effects as to make savage beasts of people who before had been placable human beings. He said that when his tenants wanted music they generally preferred to buy it outside, on the same plan as their restaurant luxuries, where they could enjoy the essence of the article and leave the residuum behind.

Mr. Benjamin thanked the proprietor for the delicate way in which he put a strenuous case, but intimated that the only rest the tenants would obtain from him would be where the notes of the music played demanded it. The proprietor threatened summary procedure. Mr. Benjamin pointed to his lease and reminded his landlord that the clause covering disorderly noises could not possibly apply to the play-

ing of such music as the "Götterdämmerung" at three o'clock in the morning. The case was taken to court, and Mr. Benjamin, with the aid of an able lawyer, won. The favorableness of the decision was based upon these points: first, that the music of Richard Wagner was originally neither conceived nor executed by the composer in any spirit of animosity toward mankind, but rather for the elevation of mankind; second, that the playing of the music of Richard Wagner was not attempted by the defendant with any malicious motive of visiting distress upon a contiguous community, but was the manifestation of a studious and esoteric desire to become better acquainted with the technical turbulences of the master; third, that the playing of the "Götterdämmerung" at the hour of three o'clock in the morning, was so seasonably connected with the "twilight of the gods" that defendant must rather be commended for his observance as an artist than for his disagreeableness as a tenant; and, fourth, that defendant, in playing said "Götterdämmerung" until the hour of three o'clock in the morning, had in no way exceeded the ordinary time limit of a Wagner opera.

With the advent of Summer the time came for open windows. One evening when, between rolls, Mr. Benjamin walked to the window to look out reflectively at the night, he found the street was crowded with a hushed and listening assemblage of people.

He called his wife.

"There must be a fire in the neighborhood," she said.

"Oblivious woman," said Mr. Benjamin, calmly; and he sat down to the "Eroica Symphony."

The next morning Mrs. Benjamin came into the dining-room with the newspaper.

"Joseph!" she cried. "You are becoming famous," and she read aloud the following:

A MASTER IN AMBUSH

Last evening the residents of Central Park West were treated to another of the

Open Window Chamber Recitals inaugurated by the Unknown Master of the Berkeley Apartment-House. The street was comfortably filled with a modish audience. Among those present were several of the musical critics of the metropolitan press. Mr. E. Major, of the *Clavichord*, was leaning in his accustomed place against the voluted column of the street-lamp, while Mr. F. Minor, of the *Spinnet*, lounged insouciantly against a freshly painted tree-box. Undoubtedly this Unknown Master has his message, and it was the opinion of every one present last evening that he is delivering it.

Mrs. Benjamin laid down the paper and looked across the table at her husband with a glow of wifely pride. Calmly, serenely, he was breakfasting on two poached eggs and gazing straight ahead of him, far away into space.

"Joseph!" cried Mrs. Benjamin, in alarm, "you no longer listen to anything that I say. You are not the same man you used to be!"

"Miranda, I am afraid that art has come between us," said Mr. Benjamin. "As the paper says, I have a message, and a power stronger than myself forbids the relinquishment of the mission." With that, he reached for the second egg.

One evening, after "Thus Spake Zarathustra," a card was brought in to Mr. Benjamin, bearing the inscription:

JOHANN WOLFGANG SCHLUSS.

Impresario of the Royal Münchener-Augustiners.

Gesundheit Strasse. München.

Herr Schluss immediately followed the card. He was a big man, his height accentuated by a long surtout of black. He wore a pointed beard, had restless, gleaming eyes and a smile of craft that was Mephistophelian. He brought in with him a breeze of forceful personality and vast activity. He seemed to have only a few moments to spare, and spoke in excellent English.

"Mr. Benjamin, the musical critic of the *Clavichord* has directed my attention to you. I arrived only in time to hear you play the final movement of the 'Richard Strauss.' That is enough. I don't want to hear any more. I want *you!*"

Astounded at the suddenness of the invasion, Mr. Benjamin could scarcely move his lips to ask for explanation.

"Excuse my haste in presenting the proposition," said Herr Schluss; "my coach is waiting. Do you remember how the voice of Jenny Lind was first discovered? A man passing through a street happened to hear her. You have been discovered in the same way."

"But—I——"

"It is my intention to open with you in New York at the Madison Square Garden, because I can see that you require room for your volume. I shall play you afterward at Boston, Philadelphia and Chicago. We then jump to San Francisco. From there we go to Australia. Thence to England, and from England at once to Germany, where I shall finish up the season by playing you at Bayreuth, in the Temple of Wagner!"

"What about Paris?" feebly excepted Mr. Benjamin, for although he was trembling from the shock of the impresario's rapid explanation of the nature of his visit, he had not lost all sense of relative geography. "Why exclude Paris?"

"Paris I reserve for your death."

"For my death!" gasped Benjamin.

"Yes. Paris is the only city in the world where they do justice to the illustrious dead. They bury great men there with pomp, display; and on the day of the funeral they usually have a rain-storm which makes the long procession of umbrellas look picturesque in the illustrated papers."

"But why must I die in Paris?"

"Safety clause in the contract. All your post-obit phonograph privileges will revert to me, and the value of these will be enhanced if you die with international *éclat*."

"But why should I die at all?" persisted Benjamin.

"Consider your age," pleaded Schluss. "At your time of life, to produce such music is phenomenal. But—if you will pardon me—it is your swan-song! That is the very reason I am here. I see in you the

delayed but condensed, comet-like quality of genius. You will be great, and the grandest thing of all is that you will not last long enough for people to become accustomed to you."

"This is very refreshing information you are conveying to me," said Mr. Benjamin.

Herr Schluss went on like a telegraph instrument: "Now for the minor, but not less important, details. You must let your hair grow. I must have a clause in the contract which expressly forbids your having it cut. It must also be bleached to give you an appearance similar to that of the Abbé Liszt. In Winter you must wear a fur-lined coat with a sealskin collar not less than six inches deep. In Summer, any goods, in season, of eccentric misfit. You are a man of naturally kind disposition. I can read that in your eyes. You must cultivate an irritability of humor. You must smash a little bric-à-brac now and then, and kick the porter of your private car for bringing your kumyss either a minute too early or a minute too late. By the way, do you live happily with your wife?"

"We are devoted to each other," said Mr. Benjamin, wondering what was to come next.

"Bad, very bad! Your domestic affairs must at once become unsettled. You do not need to beat your wife, exactly, but you must make life very miserable for her. There is no more potent form of advertisement than family unhappiness. I think that is all, for the present. Nothing remains now but the consideration of terms. If you will call on me tomorrow at the Majestic we will discuss them, and then there will be nothing to do but sign the contracts and go right ahead."

Herr Schluss at once strode to the door.

"Wait, wait!" said Mr. Benjamin, his head a-swim with the suddenness of it all. "You—you perhaps are not aware that I have been playing the piano only indirectly?"

"Ah, am I not!" cried the impre-

sario, with a smile of confidence. "I've had my fill of the regular piano-players; there are too many of them. I purpose to be first in the field with the twentieth century mechanical Thalberg!"

With that the black Mephistopheles vanished through the door, as he might have made his exit through the wings at the opera house, and Mr. Benjamin relapsed into a chair, feeling that he was face to face with his mission.

IV

It was not long before the musical world was awaiting expectantly the advent of the new virtuoso. The announcement was one well calculated to stimulate interest:

HERR JOHANN WOLFGANG SCHLUSS
Will have the honor of presenting, for
One Recital only,
On the evening of October 25th, at
Madison Square Garden,
Mr. JOSEF BENEVSKI.

The engagement of this distinguished artist is necessarily limited. The impresario can place so little reliance on the temperament of the master that he can scarcely promise he will play at all. The repertoire will be chosen impromptu according to the caprices of Mr. Benevski. The audience is respectfully requested not to applaud the artist. Applause annoys Mr. Benevski and conveys to him no meaning concerning the quality of his work with which he is not already acquainted. Carriages will kindly approach and leave the Garden on the south street, keeping to the linoleum side.

The eventful evening came. The house was crowded. It was a typical first-night assemblage of the musical *cognoscenti*. You could tell that by the way they whispered throughout the recital, to the discomfort of that unfortunate minority which can only feel music without technically understanding it.

There was a long delay before Benevski appeared, which made even the most doubtful begin to feel that perhaps he really was an artist. When, at last, he did appear, this fear became intensified. Certainly, the white-haired figure that, with such a culti-

vatedly bored expression, walked to the piano must be that of an artist. Benevski sat down. The programme-rustling did not at once subside. Benevski waited calmly, looking at the ceiling. In a quarter of an hour, when a sympathetic hush had settled over the auditorium, and the entire assemblage could feel its heart pulsating from the nervousness of over-wrought anticipation, he saw to the adjustment of his perforated roll and opened with the X Minor Concerto of Chopin. He finished it amid thunders of forbidden applause. It was one of the post-humous Chopin concertos, and he had torn out of the hearts of his auditors with instantaneous, almost piratical authority, the bravo cry that always greets the twin birth of masterly composition and interpretation.

But why linger, why describe, when there are morning newspapers published, and critics are found to tell one what to think:

Benevski's attack was superb . . . breadth limited only by the walls of the auditorium . . . has given a new shiver to the piano.

His foot-board touch is great. There now remains no doubt that civilization has over-cultivated the dexterity of the fingers, ignoring entirely the latent virtuosity of the feet.

The critics of the second-class journals were not so kind. One of them said:

It is so hard to know what he is getting at, and so difficult to get at the player.

The real musical critics dealt with the performance in their usual judicial and unmistakably professional style:

. . . Tone, round and responsive
. . . Chords, firm and exquisitely balanced . . . Used the pedal-lever with verve and decision, while the *allegro* button in the *scherzo* of the Schumann sonata was worked with great technical surety.

. . . Especially strong in his chromatic runs, which we regret to say do not take him far enough . . . The change from the *bercaroles* and *berceuses* to the Chopin Funeral March was most impressive . . . Made it a study in hearse-plumes. Nothing lacking but the death of the player . . . A pleasure, after hearing such an artist, to leave the place.

Yet, the rivet of Benevski's success was not driven home until the following day. Schluss came hurrying to him with a triumphant face, a handful of letters and an armful of packages.

"What are these?" asked Benevski.

"Letters and samples from the soap merchants, the malt extract men, and the piano-makers. They offer money for your signature to testimonials. Your success as a virtuoso is now assured. Just put your signature to half a dozen of these."

"But I haven't tried the things yet," protested Benevski.

"It isn't necessary. Sign." And Schluss gave him the prepared forms. Benevski signed, certifying to the wonderful recuperative powers of various food tablets and elixirs. Of all the testimonials the following was perhaps the most interesting:

GENTLEMEN: I have used the Skagamore Grand Piano you sent me on my tour around the world. It has stood thoroughly the trials of a sea voyage. Climatic changes have not in any way affected its original tone, which is to-day as fresh and pristine as on the day I purchased it. I consider the Skagamore Grand the best hammering keyboard for the diapasonola that I have ever used.

BENEVSKI.

After signing this, Benevski looked up at Schluss, helplessly. "I never lied like this before," he murmured, as Schluss departed. "That man has cast some occult spell around me. I am in his power."

Schluss did not succeed, however, in making trouble between the virtuoso and his wife. When Benevski parted from her on his tour around the world the separation was most amicable. Their apartments had been taken originally on a five-years' lease and Mrs. Benjamin was still to occupy them. Mr. Benjamin did not tell his wife that he should never return to her again—that according to his contract he must die in Paris. He left her looking forward expectantly to his return some day—better so!

A tour of the world is done quickly; especially so under the hand of an impresario playing for points. The schedule was Philadelphia, Boston, Chicago and San Francisco, one night each, with a triumph for the exponent of the "new music" everywhere. At San Francisco they met the steamer for Australia, where, at Melbourne, they played one Saturday afternoon. Schluss husbanded his artist like a precious stone. He allowed his public merely to catch a facet glint, and then he pulled the screen, for, though a trickster, Schluss himself had the soul of an artist. Reaching England, Benevski played privately for the King and Queen, refusing to play in public on account of the climate. The pair arrived at Bayreuth on the morning of Wagner's birthday; here Benevski was scheduled to play at eleven in the morning. Schluss had the instrument sent to the theatre, and kept Benevski at his hotel until three o'clock in the afternoon, saying that the audience would never understand it if they should open the recital on the scheduled hour.

When Benevski arrived at the theatre the auditorium was filled with a mass of restless, programme-fanning people that represented all the musical tramps of earth.

"Schluss," he said, nervously, "I have a fear—a misgiving."

"Poof!" cried Schluss. "It's because you are going to play the master in his own home."

"No; I am afraid of the instrument. I spoke to the King about it in England. I told him I had trouble. He comforted me by telling me that trouble was indigenous to everybody. But I am sure the trouble is in the instrument."

"What do you think the trouble is?" asked Schluss.

"I think it is in the valves. The instrument has not worked right since we made the voyage to Australia. The tones have lost their brilliancy and articulation. I haven't the same control of my dynamics."

"Play!" cried Schluss. "Don't be a weakling in the home of Wagner."

Benevski played and scored his first fiasco in the land of the musical Mahomet! He heard a blurred explosion in the interior of the instrument—the music gasped itself out into the silence of nothingness, and, rising from the stool, he fled from the sight of the assemblage.

Schluss appeared with the saving genius of a Napoleon, and said:

"Friends of music! Benevski and Richard Wagner once drank bock-beer together. How beautiful is the loyalty of the human heart when even the severity of professional training—the studiously cultivated abstraction of an artist—must yield to the emotions called up by the memory of a departed friend!"

No more impressive moment had ever been known in Bayreuth. And when Schluss and Benevski investigated the instrument they found that the leather bellows of the diapasónola had been eaten by ship-rats on the voyage from Australia. Benevski collapsed at the revelation. A doctor was called in and diagnosed the virtuoso's case as valvular disease of the heart, brought on through too strenuous association with his instrument.

"To Paris!" cried Schluss.

And there Benevski went, to carry out the final clause of the contract.

V

ABOUT one year later—Mrs. Benjamin's lease had still three years to run—several ladies and gentlemen were sitting chatting under one of the loggia arches that gave such a picturesque effect to the façade of the Berkeley Apartment-House, Central Park West.

It was evening, and the talk had turned on music, evidently suggested by the fact that several of the party had been to the opera that afternoon.

"By the way," said one, "have you ever heard anything further about Benevski?"

"Benevski?" laughed another; "why, he's in Paris, dying according to contract."

"How do you know?"

"I met Schluss the other day at the 'Martin.' He told me. Perhaps all our friends here do not know the story. Benevski used to live in this house, you know. His wife, in fact, still lives here. They were a quiet couple, and we hardly knew that they existed until the day that Benjamin—that was his name then—got one of those mechanical piano attachments, not bad things in their way, but which he persisted in playing until the most unheard of hours in the morning. Soon, every inhabitant of the place complained about it. He kept on. Legal redress was resorted to, but it turned out that there was nothing strictly in the letter of the law that could succeed in either stopping him or ousting him. Every known resource was exhausted by all the neighbors without avail. Finally, we organized a syndicate to get rid of him. He fancied he was a musician, you know—that he played the music all himself. We hired a bankrupt impresario to prove to him that he did—to make him an offer to take him on tour. Schluss undertook the enterprise, having everything to gain and nothing to lose. And so we got rid of Benevski at last. It cost the syndicate of this Central Park block just one hundred thousand dollars, but it was cheap at that, eh, folks?" appealing to the others; and all laughed immoderately.

Suddenly the strains of music were heard.

"I wonder where that comes from," said one. "It can't be from the Mall pavilion. The wind is not in the right direction."

Another of the party leaped to his feet, as though suddenly shot. He had been the prime mover in the anti-Benjamin affair.

"Gentlemen!" he cried, with feeling, "we have thrown our one hundred thousand dollars into the gutter! That is piano music, and it emanates from one of the upper rooms in this house!"

It is an old, familiar strain; it comes from an old, familiar quarter, and the lease, gentlemen, has still three years to run!"

The music was the *vorspiel* to "The Flying Dutchman."

Benevski had broken the contract and come home to finish his swan-song.



THE LAST JOURNEY

SOME day the winding path that we have trod,
Its changing purpose ever unrevealed,
Will lead us safely to a sunny field
Where white and crimson clover breaks the sod.
Some day, when we have passed beneath the rod,
Our harvest at the best a barren yield,
The heart-aches and the pain will all be healed
By that White Peace which is the gift of God.

And yet a little longer I would wait,
The while thy sands of life still slowly run,
Until for thee the sunny fields unbar;
Yes, I will stand beside the meadow gate
Till thy last journey, too, is almost done,
And on the clover faintly gleams a star.

MYRTLE REED.



THE MAN AND THE PEN

GEORGE BURTON'S handwriting alone is a difficult task to decipher. This, together with a careless habit of dashing his l's and shifting the wrong letter into a word, has a tendency to make his chirography appear weirdly grotesque.

The following curiosity was discovered by Miss Brown in her mail:

MY DEAR MISS BROWN:

Yes, the small pox of candy was from me; a little birth-dog token—that was all. I omitted to put in my card by accident. It was exceedingly careless of me, and I was sorry afterward, when I recotected. I do not believe that I ever neglected to send my card with a present before. It is bad form, you know and often leads to much embarrassmenx for some one else, who is not guilty. My regard for you was the only incentive I had in sending it; please do not mention the thought.

I have quite recovered from the surfeit of claret punch I had at the Merrill's, thanx you, and my bead-ache has entirely gorre.

Did I tell you the other evening about Williams's singing? He had his voice fried by Farrachinni, who pronounced it an unusually high terror. Sig. F. charges Ten hollars an hour, I betieve. I hope and I do not hope that Pilly follows it up.

Last night I went to the Holburn's dance. Met a girl there with blond hair, blue eyes and deep, bewitching pimples. She had a cream-colored dress and a red American-Beauty nose; says she is acquainted with you—forget her name.

Where were you Thursday night? I slopped at the house at a quarter of nine and rung the front-door bett. Nobody answered. I went around to the Flifton and ate a whole wetch-rabble.

Sincerety youms,

GEORGE E. BURTON.

Cramercy Dark, Mag eightieth, nineteen hundred and two.

ROY MELBOURNE CHALMERS.

BELATED

By Charles Gordon Rogers

CALHOUN took the telegram irefully. At no time did he like business; and at such a time as this, a time of pleasure, or at least the pursuit of it, the intrusion of commerce was an insult.

But this message caused him, if but for a moment, a new sensation. He had supposed it to be of the cut-and-dried sort; Cone & Co. offered so and so, and the market stood thus and thus; should they accept? As if Harding did not know more than any one else—at least, any one at .007 Broadway—about such things? So ran his thoughts as he crumpled the envelope and unfolded the yellow sheet. He stared and frowned as he read and re-read the line. He had not thought it could be from her. But then, had he thought of her at all, even once, since leaving home?

Come home. I need you.—LAURA.

What on earth could his wife need him for? If there was any business that required the trained intelligence of a man, Harding could and would attend to it. He had told Harding to telephone, and also to see his wife now and then, and do whatever might be required in connection with the larger necessities of the household.

He wrote an answer, brief as his patience. "See Harding. He will do anything." He did not sign even an initial; and when the message was handed to the night operator, he lighted a cigar and impatiently waited for his train.

It was breakfast-time, and a fine morning, when he reached his destination and hotel, five hundred miles

south and on the sea. He had slept well, in spite of the warm night; for the sea air had been sedative, and his berth a good one. So, good-humored once more, and hungry and vigorous, he scanned the register eagerly for her name ere he wrote his own.

Yes, she was here; at breakfast, the head-waiter informed him; and so he passed through the large, cool room until, at the farther end, by a window, he came to her—golden-haired, blue-eyed, pink and white and sensuous, serene and smiling, with the eyes of a score of men upon her.

"So you have come—at last!" she said, as she gave him her soft fingers.

"It has seemed 'at last!'" he answered. "It was the longest waking night I ever put in; and, added to that, only a chance of finding you here."

"And hasn't the upshot of the 'chance' justified the journey?"

"You are radiant!"

"And you look as fresh as—as that garden, after a long 'waking' night! You fibber! You slept like your very conscience!"

"Even that dreams of you."

"Do you know, I thought—not feared—that you would, after all, go home."

"Why? Have you never realized what a siren you are—and here, by your native blue element?"

"But the sirens were not at all nice! You forget your mythology. Perhaps you left it—at home."

"Well, I am farther from home than ever now."

"Perhaps, by distance. But distance lends enchantment."

"A fallacy, Beryl. It is nearness

that lends enchantment, and I am here to prove it—by remaining."

"But, if she should write?"

"A remote contingency. She telegraphed."

"Oh?"

"To say: All's well. Enjoy yourselves."

"So she presupposed a flirtation?"

"She knows I don't revel in my own society."

"By the experience of her own? Well, so do I, for that matter." And so on, until at last they rose, laughing, and passed in excellent humor, each with the other, to the broad veranda overlooking the blue sea.

On the point of going out, three mornings later, he had a telegram—telegram number two—put in his hand. He showed his annoyance as he opened it. Then, suddenly, his expression changed, and the boy saw the tall and handsome gentleman from the north grow pale beneath his tan.

The tall gentleman crushed the bit of paper. Since Janet has taken upon herself to telegraph in such an imperative way, it must have been because Laura was unable to write, that she was—that she had been—ill. Why had she not said so, plainly, in that first message? He would have gone at once had he known, as he would go now.

He smoothed out the crushed paper and reread this second word from home:

Your wife in great danger. Come at once.—JANET.

It was two days old, belated. Then he turned quickly to the railway office. The boy, polite but ubiquitous, was at his elbow again. The horses were at the door.

"Have the horses sent back. I shall not drive this morning. And—" he paused—"tell Mrs. Hope I have been called away very suddenly."

He would not see her, he said to himself. The conscience that, asleep, had dreamed of her, now, awakened, called for his wife.

Mrs. Hope might think what she

pleased. He was quite done with her; and with this sudden inversion of sentiment, he mutely reviled her. Already the liason had turned to dust and ashes at the touch of fate.

As if it had been scheduled for some individual contingency, a crisis such as he now experienced, there was a through train tabled to leave in ten minutes. He could catch it by furious driving, and did; leaving bag and baggage behind.

The train sped on, but the day dragged. He sent a wire to Janet, bidding her reply; but no reply came, and his heart was in a tumult.

He had never cared, to his superficial knowledge, in the past five years so much for his wife as he seemed to care now. If he should be too late? . . . He had a thousand sweet memories of her, but they turned to bitterness for him, even as they came. These involuntary recollections swept like a tide upon him, crowding him over the shifting sands of self-condonement to the steel wall of self-conviction, from which there was no escape.

Indeed, he could see nothing but Laura's face; and when, that evening, they flashed by a south-bound train and he caught a glimpse of a woman's face in the last car, it seemed to him that it was hers, and he started up with almost a cry.

The sun was high on that early Summer morning when the long journey came to an end; but only the toilers had awakened to another day. The avenues were flecked with sunshine, but very still, as he drove swiftly toward his home.

Well, thank God, there was his house at last! But now—thank God again—the windows gave no sign that he had come too late. He saw the housemaid turn away from a drawing-room window, but he thought it strange that no face appeared above, that staid, old, anxious Janet did not show herself at the metallic sound of the hoofs upon the asphalt. He rang the bell, and was instantly smitten with self-reproach as he heard

its sound, fearing it might have disturbed her rest. Then, abusing himself for having forgotten it, he let himself in by his latch-key. He smiled faintly at his reflection, haggard and unshaven, in the glass, as he stepped softly, like an intruder, across the hall. A sound made him look up, and he saw Janet, in white attire, peering at him over the balustrade.

"Is—is she—out of danger?" he whispered, hoarsely, pausing on the first stair.

It seemed to him that his housekeeper smiled—a grim smile that made him go two strides up, and stand staring, incredulous.

"Didn't you understand?" she said. And her voice, unrepressed, seemed loud in the breathless quiet of the house. "She said she'd telegraphed, so I thought you knew."

"What in God's name do you mean?" he demanded, and ran swiftly up the broad stairs. "Is my wife not ill? Your message said she was in great danger."

His housekeeper neither flushed nor flinched before his angry stare, but looked him squarely in the face.

"No, she wasn't ill," she said, slowly. "It was Mr. Harding was the danger, and she's gone away—with him."



CUPID'S CALLING

I'VE heard Love called things harsh and mild,
 A blessing and a bore,
 But never have I heard him styled
 An architect before.
 My cynic friend, who laughs at banns,
 Doth stoutly, though, declare
 That certain 'tis Love draws most plans
 For castles in the air!

ROY FARRELL GREENE.



SHE NEVER DOES

MUSIC has charms to soothe the savage breast, but the girl next door doesn't play that kind.



THE FAIR SEX

WE bring them bon-bons every night,
 And when we win their hearts to boot,
 The darling girls turn round and say,
 "To make him love you, feed the brute!"

A DIALOGUE

By Ella Wheeler Wilcox

- HE— Let us be friends. My life is sad and lonely,
While yours, with love, is beautiful and bright.
Be kind to me. I ask your friendship only.
No star is robbed by lending darkness light.
- SHE— I give you friendship as I understand it;
A sentiment I feel for all mankind.
- HE— Oh, give me more! May not one friend command it?
- SHE— Look in the skies, 'tis there the star you'll find—
It casts its beams on all with equal favor.
- HE— I would have more than what all men may claim.
- SHE— Then your ideas of friendship, strongly savor
Of sentiments which wear another name.
- HE— May not one friend receive more than another?
- SHE— Not man from woman, and still remain a friend.
Life holds but three for her—a father, brother,
Lover; against the rest she must contend.
- HE— Against the Universe, I would protect you
With my life even, nor hold the price too dear.
- SHE— But not against yourself, should fate select you
As Launcelot for foolish Guinevere.
- HE— You would not tempt me?
- SHE— That is undisputed.
We put the question back upon the shelf.
My point remains unanswered, unrefuted;
No man protects a woman from himself.
- HE— I am immune. For once I loved with passion,
And all the fires within me burned to dust.
I think of woman but in friendly fashion,
In me she finds a comrade safe to trust.
- SHE— So said Mont Pelée to the listening ocean.
Behold what followed! Let the good be wise.
Though human hearts proclaim extinct emotion,
Beware how high the tides of friendship rise.



A WISE PRECAUTION

BIGGS—Why did Dobbs postpone his marriage another year?

BOGGS—His fiancée has just graduated from a cooking-school, and he wishes to give her time to forget some of the things she learned there.

THE MOON AND THE MAIDS

By Marvin Dana

“YOU have kept me waiting,” Helen cried, and there was a note of irritation in her voice.

“It was because I wished to be alone with you,” I answered, diplomatically. “If I had been on time, we should have had all the crowd about us on the way over.”

At that she smiled and was appeased. Really, she was wholly adorable, as she stood on the landing-steps, waiting for me to help her into the boat. At sight of her loveliness I was glad indeed of my tardiness—a tardiness I had *not* planned; but women always accept flattery more readily than they accept excuses.

I thought Helen a trifle pale, and said so.

“It’s the moonlight,” she explained, easily.

But I was sceptical. “You have a splendid color usually,” I declared; and to restore it, I abruptly changed the subject.

“I was late, in order to save trouble,” I announced in a matter-of-course manner.

“What do you mean?”

“The steering, you know.”

“The steering?”

“Naturally.”

“You think——?”

“My dear girl, I know.”

“But I steer——”

“Yes,” I admitted, sadly, “you do, indeed. I row and you steer—heaven defend us! Now, when we’re alone on the lake, with miles clear, it’s safe enough. But when there are other boats—! I said, you know, that I didn’t want a crowd around us; it’s

unpleasant—don’t you see?—collisions and tangles and all that, and one gets oneself disliked.”

“Oh, you meant that, did you, when you said——”

“Why, what on earth did you suppose I meant?” I questioned, blandly.

Then I sat, without remorse, and watched a verification of my statement as to her usual color, for her face was all a flaming red. I laughed.

“You dare!”

But I reached out my hand to help her into the boat.

“Helen,” I said, softly, “all the beauty of the sunset is in your cheeks just now. You must forgive my teasing, for the sake of this loveliness you have gained. You were a trifle too pale.”

Then a dimple grew in the rose of her cheek, and she put her hand in mine, and smiled.

I pulled lazily at the oars, and we floated out over the drowsing waters of Champlain. Burlington lay on the hillside whence we had come, almost hidden within the foliage of the trees. Few sounds were borne to us from its streets, and those served only to vary pleasantly the monotony of the evening silence. As the boat passed farther from the shore the mountains eastward beyond the city rose swiftly on the horizon, fantastic silhouettes against the sky. On the west, the Adirondacks loomed in rugged trend far as eye could reach. All about us the lake lay in level calm, dark and mysterious, save where a petaled path, tremulous as aspens, reflected the glory of the moon. The air that drifted by

us was warm with the sensuous life of June, soft, enervating, vibrant with subtle strength of joy.

I looked at earth and sky and water, and then again toward the sky, at the serene loveliness of the moon. An instant my soul trembled with desire for the vague, the awful splendors beyond mind's conceiving. Then a movement close at hand startled me; my eyes fell to—Helen. Her flower-like face shone ravishing in the mellow light; her eyes glowed; her lips were ripe and red. I dropped the oars and moved toward her.

"I can't steer if you don't row," she said.

I suddenly realized that I was becoming too sentimental, without due preparation of the object. With a sigh I resumed my rowing, and as I pulled, I spoke my mind.

"In a scene so beautiful as this, Helen, where all the senses find delight, the heart, too, seeks——"

"I once heard a sermon like that," Helen interrupted.

"The deuce you did!" I rejoined, impolitely—I was much irritated. "It must have been a pretty poor sermon, if it was much like——" I broke off, in confusion.

"Oh, go on; finish—please do," Helen urged. She was enjoying herself mightily; and now, at sight of my embarrassment, she laughed, a laugh gay and mocking—and most sweet.

"But be serious," I pleaded.

"But be gay," she retorted.

"The moon——" I began.

"Pooh! The moon is dead and out of the world," she railed.

"Anyhow, just now it seems to be a live issue," I insisted, drily.

"It's really only a ghost," Helen continued, "and, for a ghost, it is quite too unsuitably frivolous. Somehow, one associates with it all sorts of silly love-makings and straw-rides and balconies and things. Byron said *he* was in it."

"Byron was in the moon?" I queried, agape.

"Stupid! No. *He* was in it, the—er—well, then, since you are both illit-

erate and dense, the—er—oh, the devil!"

"Helen!" I cried, truly shocked.

"That wasn't an exclamation," she explained, with indignant haste; "it was a quotation. Do you understand at last? Byron said, 'The—er—the devil's in the moon for mischief.'"

"He is, indeed," I agreed, sullenly. One hardly enjoys being called at the same time both illiterate and dense—by a girl, especially by a very pretty girl, more especially by that girl when one is alone with her in a boat by moonlight, most especially when that girl is one's betrothed! So I bent to my oars with angry vigor.

"Forgive me, dear." Her voice came soft and insinuating as a caress. She slipped from her seat and knelt before me, her hands on my knees. "I'm sorry, dear. It was rude and vulgar and hateful, and I deserve a good whipping. Kiss me, Billy."

I kissed her, and my temper grew happier.

"But it is a wonderful moon, you know," I remarked, presently, when we were back in our places.

"The most wonderful moon I know!" Her voice was surcharged with reverent awe.

For a moment I did not appreciate the sarcasm of her words. When their significance dawned on me, I resumed my rowing. Really, she was too provoking!

This time Helen proved unrepentant. Instead, she became garrulous on the subject of the moon—garrulous, but not sentimental.

"It is that—er—imp of mischief in the moon that makes me mischievous, Billy, dear. Byron was right; the moon is a mischief-maker, always causing trouble, as between you and me now, for example."

"Oh, not at all," I demurred, stiffly. "It's not the moon—it's—er—some-one else."

"Meaning me?"

"Yes, you!" I agreed, savagely.

But Helen only laughed, though I had thought to see her much put out.

"You think so, but you are quite

wrong," she declared; "it's the moon—yes, indeed. It makes one mildly lunatic, just moonstruck enough to be silly."

"Not me," I asserted, firmly.

"Oh, you! Perhaps you are not so sensitive. But, anyhow, it's an awfully big moon to-night; you'll feel it before the evening is over. Mark my words."

"Is that a joke or a prophecy?"

"Both; it's funny and it's true. You'll do something foolish very soon."

"Then I'd best do something sensible while there's time," I said; and, at the saying, kissed her.

"Not so silly, yet?" I questioned, happily.

"Oh, not yet," she said, and smiled.

"That was quite the proper thing to do, under all the circumstances."

"Including the moon?"

"Including the moon. Now, if it had been another girl, under all the circumstances, including the moon——"

"Absurd!" I cried.

"Why absurd?"

"As if I could kiss another girl!"

"Oh, I fancy you could kiss another girl—if you tried."

"But I wouldn't!"

"I should think not, indeed!" she exclaimed, tartly. "How dare you even speak of anything so horrid!"

"But I—I didn't suggest it," I pleaded. "You said——"

"I won't hear a word," she cried; and then sat silent and stern, whilst I rowed swiftly, pondering on the ways of women. So we came to the point across the bay where we were to join the others of our party.

There were a score of us, all young—even the chaperons. From the beach a smooth lawn ran back a hundred yards or more, varied by a few trees and shrubberies. In the open places there was light in plenty for our revels from the stars and moon, but beneath the trees the shadows made mysterious darkness, an abundance of romantic nooks in which to murmur tender vows. The scene was, indeed, perfect in its charm. All the elements conspired to fashion a para-

dise for our pleasuring. There was gentle languor, but no oppressiveness, in the idly-drifting Summer air; the greensward was level and soft and velvet-black in the mellow light; the grouping of the foliage was a constant delight to the eye; beyond, the waters of the Champlain stretched their shimmering loveliness, and mirrored and multiplied the beauties of the heavens; the waves, kissing so softly the pebbles of the beach, whispered daintily of the love that is Nature's heart. Over all, the silver graces of the moon touched to a magical splendor, an insistent glamour that made each and every thing strange and wonderful, and most beautiful.

From the concealment of clustered shrubberies came the music of harp and violin. The violinist, a boy destined to fame, played with a skill and passion that thrilled, while the delicate ripples of the harp wrought histories in harmonies—the universal truths of which the melody told the single emotions. Here and there a bird, awakened by these unwonted intrusions, wondered tunelessly. The shrill chorus of insects sounded in a pulse of absolute contentment. And ever the stately moonbeams streamed over all, like a benediction of peace.

We had just finished dancing the Virginia reel, when the catastrophe occurred. We had been footing it like fays, winding blithesome over the grass, swinging and tripping it tirelessly, till the wild rhythm was in our blood, and the calm of the night was forgotten in the gay leaping of our hearts.

My partner for the dance was a vivacious brunette, pretty, petite, all dimples and smiles and joyousness. As we paused for a moment in the shadows, her eyes, darkly flashing and provoking, drew me. My face was close to hers; I kissed her—only once, I swear. Then she fled from me.

Of a sudden, I became sane and—sorry; for I loved Helen, and her only, and I cared not a jot for any other woman.

That episode ended my pleasure

for the evening, though we danced for an hour or so longer, until the chap-erons instituted martial law.

On the way home, I rowed my best, until our boat was far ahead of the others; then, as I rested on my oars, I spoke to Helen, for my conscience would give me no peace.

"Do you believe I love you?"

"Why, yes," she answered, much surprised. "Why?"

"I wish you to remember it, to keep it in mind just now. Remember, I love you—you! nobody else."

"Well, what of it?"

"I kissed another girl to-night."

I had meant to tell it skilfully, but now I realized that it had been almost more than I could do to tell it at all.

There was a silence. Helen sat motionless, her face turned from me. At last I could endure it no longer.

"Helen!" I cried, humbly.

"Do not speak to me!" she exclaimed, and her tone was so bitter that I uttered not another word—till I said, "good night," as I left her at the door.

For two days I meditated on the irony of fate and the injustice of the universe at large. Then, as Helen remained persistently invisible when I called, I wrote her a letter, in which I embodied my musings—in part. Here is an extract:

I committed a folly. It was a crime against my love for you. But it was not a premeditated crime. Even, it was not a crime, morally. The moral quality of an action lies in the intention, and I had no intention—absolutely no intention—of kissing that girl. She's not so very pretty, usually; and I don't like her particularly, while I love you. Will you shatter our life's happiness because of this foolish mistake I made? No, not "I made." I didn't do it—it was only a silly, superficial part of me that was guilty. The real true me was taken unawares, and is as indignant as you can be—more, for it knows the truth, while you can't quite understand it all. I have done the hardest thing to do—I have confessed. Forgive me, dearest.

Much more I wrote, but I thought most of that fact as to my confession. I had confessed! There lay the whole trouble. If I had but kept silent!

When I told Helen of the affair, I conveyed to her a wrong impression, for she could not fathom how I could love her and yet kiss another girl. So she doubted my love. I had, then, given her a false view of the matter, merely by telling the truth. At this thought I rebelled; I began to see things in a different light. I had, indeed, lied by speaking the truth, was my conclusion. To have told the truth, I should have lied, declaring that I had never kissed any other girl; then she would have believed the truth—that I loved her.

The consequence of such reasoning was that I made a vow—yes, a solemn vow: if ever I were reconciled to Helen, and if ever I kissed another girl, I would not confess it!

The next afternoon I met Helen at a lawn-party. She smiled as I approached her, and held out her hand. I seized on it, much as a drowning man clutches at the proverbial straw.

"Then you—you—" I stammered, my heart pounding.

"Yes? I what?"

"For—give—?"

"Oh, that! Of course," she returned, airily. "You see, you confessed."

"I—I confessed?"

"Otherwise, I would never have forgiven you."

I remembered my vow, and shuddered. I shuddered again, as she continued:

"For I saw you kiss her."

"The dev—that is—I—I thought you were merciless—for a week now——"

"This is the third day," she corrected me, sweetly. "But you deserved all your punishment, even though you confessed."

"I understand," I said, soberly. "I've had my lesson." I was thinking that, for the future, I must avoid temptation. Since I had sworn not to tell, I must not kiss.

"And so, you know, I was right," Helen declared, triumph in her voice.

"Eh? right?" I queried, in astonishment.

"Yes; I told you *he* was in the moon; I said you'd do something silly that night—and you did!"

"Ah, yes," I agreed, gladly; "er—*he* was in the moon that night. I was silly—it was the moon!"

But I searched my own soul with a question: Was it the moon or the girl?

Since, for the future, I am vowed against confession, I would better avoid—both!



LOVER AND ORACLE

TELL me true, Sir Oracle,
Does she love me, love me well?

"Divination is not clear;
Omens opposite appear;
Now the flame that burns her cheek
Golden thoughts of you bespeak;
Now the gleam within her eyes
Says she holds you worship-wise.
Then the cloud upon her brow
Seems to deprecate your vow;
And her lips, like Cupid's bow,
Doubts of your devotion show."

But the truth!—how may I tell?
"Ask her!" cries Sir Oracle.

CLINTON SCOLLARD.



AS TO JOKES

FRIEND—You call that a joke? You'll never be able to sell it.

HUMORIST—Well, in that case, it will be a joke on me.

"I see; and, if you do sell it, it will be a joke on the editor."



EXTREMES MEET

THE ACTOR—I say, old man, can you lend me a couple of dollars? I don't get my salary till to-morrow.

THE REPORTER—Sorry, my boy; but I haven't a cent. I got mine yesterday.

SONG

MY thoughts of you are blossoms in my heart—
 A garden from the world set far apart,
 Filled with the fragrance and the tender dew
 Of my abiding love—these thoughts of you.

They bloom so brightly that I dare not speak
 When that their flame arises to my cheek;
 I dare not speak—for fear the blooms will fall
 And show your name upon the leaves of all.

My dreams of you are bubbles from the sun,
 Life's sun of love that hath their beauty spun,
 My poet's soul sends forth each night anew
 These shining worlds that hold my dreams of you.

If every one of them could live on high
 We'd need no other stars within the sky;
 Night would be day, rose, violet and blue—
 Lit by the fires that form my dreams of you.

ANNULET ANDREWS.



POPULAR

“HOW did he make such a rapid fortune?”
 “Perfumery. He manufactured a triple extract of gasoline for
 people who couldn't afford automobiles.”



NECK OR NOTHING

TEACHER—And what was the tree with the forbidden fruit?
 JOHNNY BROOKLYN—Must 'a' been a rubber plant.



“THE villain was caught in the act,” explained my friend.
 “Which act?” I asked; “the second or the third act?”

Since then there has been a coolness between us, as he cannot understand
 my ignorance of anti-climax.

THE QUEST OF BLEEKER VAN DORN

By Herbert Hall Winslow

TWELVE o'clock, midday. At a table in the gentlemen's café at Delmonico's three fashionably attired young men of leisure were seated. Three matutinal cock-tails glowed darkly-golden in the glasses before them. Fresh from the hands of their respective valets, not one had been awake for over an hour, yet their faces wore an expression of weariness more befitting the close of a long day than its commencement.

Of the three, Walker Lindell had not yet sounded all the depths of life in his twenty-six years; Carroll Jennings had preserved some slight show of interest in the events around him; while the eldest, Bleeker Van Dorn, had drunk the unsatisfying cup of pleasure to the dregs in all the gayest capitals of the civilized world.

"Why don't you say something, Bleeker?" asked Walker, after a silence, as all put down empty glasses, and began to nibble languidly at the large hothouse strawberries now placed before them. "You haven't spoken since we sat down."

"Say something?" echoed Van Dorn, passing his hand over his face to hide a yawn. "What is there to talk about? What is there ever to talk about? A new comic-opera singer in town; somebody's wife run away; somebody else wishing his wife would run away; a new face in one of the boxes at the Metropolitan. Bah!"

"I've got something new," said Carroll Jennings; "Millicent Saxton's engagement to Jack Cranford; heard it at the ball at the Waldorf last night."

"Cranford always was a conven-

tional idiot," replied Van Dorn; "he'll marry the conventional heiress, of course."

"Well, by Jove, Bleeker!" cried Walker, "what do you want? An only child and twenty millions in her own right—isn't that game worth bagging?"

"Damnably conventional! We all go to the same houses and meet the same people, here and at Newport and in Florida and all the other places that bore a man to death. We go to Europe in shoals, cooped up in the same steamers, and take houses abroad to entertain one another all over again. And then we male idiots marry girls in our own set—when the foreign fellows with titles don't carry them off—and so fix ourselves in the same rut for life."

"Well, you don't wish to marry a milkmaid, do you? or one of the French dancers from the music halls?" said Carroll.

Bleeker Van Dorn looked serious. "The newspapers tell us," he said, slowly, "about poor devils starving to death in this big town. I never read those articles, unless I stumble on them unawares—somehow, they interfere with my digestion. But I'm starving, too, and I feel something of the despair those creatures must feel, who are probably better off starved, after all."

"Then eat your breakfast—here it is," said Walker, laughing.

Van Dorn frowned. "I'm serious—starving is the word—starving for the lack of a new sensation. My God! what wouldn't I give for a new emotion! You both smile; but I am older

than you. It's a horrible thing to be young and yet to have outlived your emotions—to feel that there is nothing that can excite, or thrill, or interest you any more."

"You seem to have quite a flow of emotions on tap, yet," said Walker. "That was dramatic, really, old man. You've gone the whole pace, except marriage. Try that, if you wish a new sensation."

"He'll never find it in marriage," said Carroll, with a laugh that he intended to be exceedingly cynical.

"I don't know," replied Walker. "They do say that the life of a married man, nowadays, is full of excitement. The girls all pronounce matrimony with a slight variation of the third syllable; and the old saying has been changed to read: 'Two is company, and three is divorce.'"

Van Dorn, evidently annoyed, picked up a morning paper and glanced at a startling headline. "That woman will be acquitted," he said, "and yet she is unquestionably guilty."

"Oh, you are reading about the Jaynes trial," said Walker, sipping his coffee. "Yes, she will be acquitted, of course. No jury would send that beauty to the electric-chair."

"How do you know she is a beauty?" asked Carroll.

"Jack Cranford raved over her; he was at the trial yesterday. By the way, Bleeker, he mentioned seeing you there."

"I was there," said Van Dorn, quietly. "Margaret Jaynes is the most beautiful woman I ever saw, and I've seen my share of them all over the world."

"And yet you think she is guilty of murder?"

"Exactly. She was in love with this fellow Carabough, and, when they eloped one day to New York from Philadelphia, she expected him to marry her immediately. The evidence shows that he postponed the wedding from day to day. She confided to the landlady of the Thirty-eighth street boarding-house that she had left an unhappy home—mother dead, step-

father unkind, and all that sort of thing. She said Carabough had compromised her in the eyes of the world, and she could not go back to Philadelphia, but that she would kill him if he trifled with her longer."

"Deliciously blood-curdling creature!" interjected Carroll.

"But see what followed," continued Van Dorn. "He returned the next evening and evidently gained her forgiveness. They started for Hoboken to be married."

"Why Hoboken?"

"Possibly because marriages made in Hoboken are more easily dissolved than those contracted in heaven—or New York. Carabough displayed a foresight worthy of a comic-opera star. At any rate, it was a very cold, dark night, and they were the only passengers on the ferryboat who remained outside. A deck-hand observed them in excited conversation, and overheard the woman accuse the man of treachery. A moment later, Carabough went overboard. No one saw him fall, but they found the woman screaming, leaning over the rail and crying out that she had been the cause of his death."

"But," said Walker, "he may have fallen overboard, as she testified at the trial. According to the evidence, he had been drinking heavily all that day."

"My dear boy," answered Van Dorn, "the chain of circumstantial evidence drawn around her is absolutely startling in its completeness. They found a letter from her in his rooms, in which she threatened to kill him if he deceived her again; she does not deny it. Why, day before yesterday, on the witness-stand——"

"I thought you went down yesterday," interrupted Walker.

"I have been there every day this week," said Van Dorn, quietly.

"You might find your new sensation there," suggested Carroll.

Van Dorn looked serious. "I might," he answered, after a pause.

Walker beckoned to the waiter for the check. "Suppose we go down to the court-house for an hour; we may

see the jury come in. I wish to see her face when she hears the verdict."

At five o'clock that afternoon Margaret Jaynes came out into the free air of Centre street and looked about her. The jury that acquitted her had been out less than an hour. Not a man would have believed her guilty, even if he had seen her commit the deed. He would have put it down as an optical illusion on his part. So much for the power of radiant beauty. All the formalities of law had been complied with. The girl was free to go wherever her fancy might dictate. Behind her, the ill-smelling, crowded court-room; the "Bridge of Sighs," the somber Tombs, with its tier upon tier of pent-up misery; the shame, the sorrow and the unsolved mystery of Raphael Carabough's death; before her—what?

No friends stood by her side. She had quietly, but firmly, refused to disclose her plans to the friendly Tombs matron, who felt a decided interest in the beautiful young woman she had held in charge for nearly two months. The girl had been equally uncommunicative with her lawyers, for whose benefit she had sold the only piece of property she possessed in the world.

As she descended the prison steps a large, flashily-dressed, red-faced woman, generously bediamonded, accosted her. There was nothing objectionable in the salutation; the words were simply these: "Come with me and see what I can do for you." But Margaret Jaynes's white face flamed red as if she had received a blow, and she gave the woman a prolonged, scornful, infinitely contemptuous stare that was completely effectual in sending her away, disconcerted and conscious of the utter failure of her design.

"She knows how to take care of herself," said Walker Lindell, lighting a cigarette across the street.

"She has need to," answered Carroll Jennings, sagely.

Only Bleeker Van Dorn looked and said nothing.

There was a crowd, of course—a con-

glomerate, East Side crowd, of many nationalities—staring at her and jostling about her as they would have stared and jostled at sight of an epileptic in a fit, a horse that had fallen through a manhole or a curbstome peddler with some new kind of magic cement. Two policemen kept them from closing in on her; but the police interest in Margaret Jaynes's case was ended, and while one officer offered to call a cab, another advised her to go away as quickly as possible.

"Pardon me," said Bleeker Van Dorn, suddenly, in low tones, very close to her. "I have no intention of intruding on you, believe me; but my carriage is at your disposal. It will take you out of this mob, wherever you wish to go, and I ask nothing more than to put you into it."

Margaret Jaynes hesitated. She looked him full in the face; and the cold refusal on her lips remained unspoken.

The crowd parted as the two crossed the street—the swagger club-man, scion of one of "our best families," and the woman who had just been acquitted of murdering her lover. He helped her into the carriage as if she had been a belle of the Charity Ball.

"Give John your directions after you're clear of this street," he said, lifting his hat. Then he rejoined his companions, and she was gone—gone, before he could observe that Margaret Jaynes, whom no one had ever seen weep since the first day of her incarceration, leaned back on the cushions, shaking with sobs, the hot tears rolling down her cheeks.

"Well, by Jove!" said Walker, as Van Dorn hurried them away; for the crowd, in lieu of better prey, had turned upon them now. "You're a wonder! That carriage episode was a master-stroke. Well, I don't blame you."

"But I pity him when the papers come out to-morrow," said Carroll. "Here's a ready-made romance for the reporters. 'Bleeker Van Dorn, one of our most exclusive——'"

"Don't be an ass, Carroll," said Van

Dorn. "As for you, Walker, if your idea of my intentions was not so characteristic of you, I should feel like knocking you down."

"Ah, then you do confess intentions!" cried Walker, unabashed.

"Did it ever occur to you that even a man like me may sometimes fall victim to a good impulse?"

"Oh, so you are doing it out of pure philanthropy! You have changed your mind and believe her innocent!"

"I haven't changed my mind. I still believe her guilty." His face lighted up; his voice sounded clear and firm, despite the roar of the street as they turned into lower Broadway. "I am going to study her mind—the mind of a murderess—but not from the sentimental point of view. I am going to make her confess her crime—to me."

"That would be too horrible!" Even Walker looked shocked.

"And useless as well as horrible," said Carroll. "Suppose your infernal plan succeeds—suppose she confesses—what will you do with her then?"

"My dear fellow," answered Van Dorn, "I have no desire to injure the girl. Her future plans are her own. I simply intend to conduct a class of one in experimental psychology, purely for my own amusement. If my researches are successful, neither you nor any other human being will ever know it."

The trio took a Broadway car, and the journey up-town was made almost in silence. A curious restraint seemed to have fallen upon all three—a restraint that was not lifted until Van Dorn left to go to his mother's. "I make it a point to dine at home once a month when I am in town," he said, smiling.

A month later the town rang with the startling news that Bleeker Van Dorn had quietly married Margaret Jaynes, at the Little Church Around the Corner.

II

MR. AND MRS. BLEEKER VAN DORN had returned from their six months'

wedding journey—a journey that included London, Paris, Vienna, Munich, Rome and half the fashionable resorts of Europe. They stopped nowhere very long; the woman's story found them out. There was no getting away from it, even at St. Petersburg; so at last Bleeker brought his wife home to New York.

As she dismissed her maid and joined him in the larger room of their luxurious apartment, she was far more regally beautiful than she had been as the notorious heroine of the Carabough case. She came to his chair and half bent over him, and there was in her face the indescribable illuminating expression of a woman who loves. She did not place her white arm about his neck, nor smooth his dark hair, nor kiss him; for Bleeker was not demonstrative himself and did not approve of these manifestations in others. A woman's caresses, as he himself said, had long since lost the power to stir his blood. And yet there was no lack of virile strength in the handsome face he turned up to her.

"Are you glad we have come home, Bleeker?"

He looked at her lazily, with the eyes of a connoisseur. Her voice was musical. She had all the outer characteristics of the well-groomed woman. Her gown was perfect, but not more perfect than the figure it enveloped. He said to himself that there was soul in her beauty, too; it was something more than the mere sensuous beauty that charms for the moment.

"Yes," he said, "there is only one New York, you know. We shall stay here, now, and go out and see people."

"Do you think," she said, very slowly, "do you believe your friends will ever think any better of me?"

It was such a preposterous question that he did not pretend to deceive her. "What do I care?" he said; "what do we care?"

"I care a great deal, Bleeker; I care so much that sometimes I feel as if the only way to repair the wrong

I have done you would be to throw myself into the river!"

She stopped and turned pale. Bleeker seemed to shiver slightly; or was it merely her imagination? The river! Ah, there were ugly memories for them both in those two little words.

"Bleeker, I have ruined your life! I had no right to marry you, dear. It was selfish, cruel. You know, we must always be ostracized! But how could I help it? From the first I used to look at you in the court-room, and yours seemed the only pitying face in all that awful crowd! And when the trial was just over and I stood there on the prison steps, all alone—oh, no woman was ever so alone!—you came to me like one of God's messengers and saved me from myself. Oh, Bleeker! how could I help loving you! How could I refuse you when you asked me to be your wife? And yet it was all wrong—all—all wrong!"

He had tried to stop her several times, but the impulsive outburst of her heart would not be stayed. She had never spoken so before. He got up nervously and sat down again.

"For heaven's sake, Margaret, don't rake up the past!" he cried, irritably.

"Forgive me, Bleeker; but now we have come back among your friends, and you must suffer all these cruel slights again on my account."

"I don't suffer from them," he answered, almost angrily. "I married you with my eyes open. I am no disciple of sickly conventionality, and I am my own master in everything. When I complain, Margaret, it will be time for you to feel like this."

"I don't mean to speak of what is past, Bleeker; I won't, after to-night; indeed, I won't. But there are some things I must say now. We ought not to try to conceal our feelings from each other. There should be perfect confidence between us."

"I am listening," he said; "but you merely harrow up your own feelings unnecessarily by pursuing this subject."

She sat on the tête-à-tête chair near him, gazing at him lovingly, sadly.

"Do your friends really believe me guilty, Bleeker?"

He did not answer.

"I could not have suffered more if I had been guilty of a hundred crimes. I dreamed, night after night, of death in that awful chair! Have I not suffered enough? The jury said I was innocent; what right have your friends to condemn me now?" She bent her head as if beneath a weight greater than she could bear.

"I tell you not to trouble about it. My friends may go to the devil. We can't stop them from thinking what they please, but we can stop caring what they think."

There was a pause. The ormolu clock struck musically. The open fire snapped and sputtered. She threw up her head at last, and her eyes gleamed proudly, defiantly.

"I won't care, Bleeker! I won't care for anything! It is enough for me to know that you believe me innocent. You have never told me so in words, but when you asked me to be your wife, that meant more than anything, and, oh, how I loved you for it!"

Another silence fell between them—a silence portentous, ominous. Bleeker opened his lips as if to speak, but for the first time in his life the words he wished to utter stuck in his throat and almost choked him.

"It is a foolish fancy, Bleeker, but just now, when we must face everybody again, and I shall need all my courage—would you mind putting your arm around me, just once, dear, and telling me—it is only a whim of mine—that you believe me innocent?"

Again she thought he shivered slightly. He shifted his position, uneasily. Then the words he had been trying to speak came to his lips.

"Are you innocent, Margaret?"

"Am—I—innocent?" The words sounded meaningless as she echoed them.

"Yes. I have never questioned you; I was content to take you as you

were and bestow on you the highest honor any man can confer on a woman; but, as you say, there should be perfect confidence between us. The time has indeed come when I feel that I should know."

She rose and looked at him with widening eyes, not sure of what she heard.

"But—you married me—and now—now you ask me if I am innocent of that—crime? I don't understand you, Bleeker."

"The fact that I married you, my dear Margaret, has nothing to do with your guilt or innocence."

"Nothing to do with my guilt or innocence! God in heaven! You asked me to be your wife—and yet you were not sure of my innocence!"

"To be candid, Margaret, I was not sure."

"You believed me guilty?"

"I did not know."

"You believe me guilty now?"

"I do not know. That is why I ask you to tell me the truth; whether you ever loved that man or not——"

"I never loved him; it was a girl's infatuation; a momentary ascendancy of a base but stronger nature. There was nothing wrong between us; I never loved him—I hated him before his death! I hate him still because he has come between you and me, even now!"

"Margaret, I don't doubt that you had cause to hate him. I should treat you no differently; I should care no less for you if you told me with your own lips that you thrust him into the water that night! I simply wish to know the truth."

"And you—my husband—ask me that?"

"I ask it because I am your husband—because I have a right to know."

She did not reply at first, but she realized it all now. Slowly, slowly, the love-light faded out of her eyes; the warm, rich color came back to her cheeks and mounted to her temples. He saw in her face the hunted look, the sudden, furious madness of a wild creature brought to bay, wounded unto death and, for the

moment, hating, and longing to destroy, the author of its misery.

"I'll not tell you!" she cried. "I'll never tell you! Believe what you wish. You have thought me a murderess all these months, and waited for this moment, when my heart was bursting with love and gratitude toward you, to say this awful thing! You—you—I could kill you for those words!"

She clenched her slender fingers; her lithe body swayed; every nerve and muscle seemed tense with overwhelming excitement. He had never seen her look like this before.

"As you killed Raphael Carabough," answered Bleeker, calmly. "Thank you; you have answered my question."

III

THE Van Dorns, greatly to the surprise of those who believed Bleeker would exert all the influence of his unquestioned social position to compel at least a certain amount of acknowledgment for his wife, did not attempt to storm even the outlying breastworks of aristocracy's citadel. He came and went among his own old cronies, was seen at the clubs as before his marriage, but did not take his wife anywhere; he did not even mention her name to his friends.

There were rumors that the Van Dorn family and its most influential connections had held a secret conclave, and decided to receive the prodigal if he would quietly divorce his wife in some distant state. Gossip added that a Van Dorn cousin of irreproachable social standing, one of the pillars of a fashionable church, had been deputized to broach this subject to Bleeker, and had been ignominiously knocked down for his pains. But these were only rumors, and neither Walker Lindell nor Carroll Jennings, rash youths as they were, dared question Bleeker concerning them.

As the weeks passed, however, a distinct moral deterioration was observed in the subject of these rumors.

He was most often found with the club set whose nightly potations were the deepest; and men remarked, in the cafés, that Bleeker Van Dorn drank absinthe like a French *roué*.

Twice the Van Dorns had changed their apartments, because other families objected to living in the same building with the heroine of a murder trial. Their present quarters were none the less luxurious; but the people in this house asked no questions and made few complaints; perhaps because they had thoroughly up-to-date skeletons of their own.

Bleeker let himself into his wife's drawing-room one night about ten o'clock, and sat down wearily. He had picked the wrong horse at the races, and the dusty ride back to town had been more disagreeable than usual in consequence. Margaret had not been well, lately. She was lying down in the adjoining bedroom when he came in.

She spoke to him from the other room, and asked if it were he. He answered that he had come home to sit and read a while. But he did not read. Instead, he paced the room nervously, in smoking-jacket and slippers, until her quick ears heard him.

"Is anything wrong, Bleeker?" came the soft voice from the other room.

"No," he answered. He paused near her door and suddenly stretched out his arms. Into his face came a passion of love and longing that startled him as he caught his own reflection in the cheval glass. He controlled himself to speak as gently as he could. "I'm nervous to-night, Margaret; I'll close the door, so that I may not disturb you."

"You do not disturb me," she answered.

His whole being thrilled at the tone of her voice. But he shut the door, although his hand trembled.

"My God!" he cried, under his breath; "in another moment I should have gone—there to her, and she—a murderess!"

For he could not drive from his heart the ugly thought, the certain conviction

that had lived and thrived there like a noxious weed, ever since he sat in the court-room and listened to the circumstantial evidence that condemned her in his eyes. He knew it all by heart. He had argued with himself hour after hour, night after night; in the cold, clear light of reason it became only the stronger, the more incontrovertible. He would have given every dollar of his fortune, half of life itself, to disprove it. He had privately hired lawyers and detectives to go over the whole wretched ground, from the time Margaret Jaynes first met Raphael Carabough to the day of his mysterious death. But nothing availed. She was beautiful, loving, queenly, fascinating—but a murderess!

He had risked everything for a new sensation. He had found only unsatisfied longings, deeper than any he had ever experienced, but suggestive only of illimitable ruin and despair. For every day held the possibility of awakening him to the consciousness that he had grown to love Margaret with an intensity of which he had never, even in his earlier days, deemed himself capable.

And she was a murderess! She had killed one man. Might she not yet, in a fit of rage similar to that he had witnessed, destroy her husband as she had destroyed her lover?

He wiped the cold perspiration from his forehead and his wrists. There was absinthe on the sideboard. He stepped into another room, and as he poured the oily, greenish liquid into the glass, his hand shook so that he could hardly raise it to his lips. Then he went back to the little drawing-room and unlocked his desk in the alcove, drew out a scrap-book in which the newspaper accounts of Margaret Jaynes's trial were pasted, and began to read them for the hundredth time.

There were the accursed words, in black and white. "The prisoner admitted that she had threatened Carabough's life when angered." Had she not practically threatened him—her husband—three months ago? He put

the book down. He felt the need of more absinthe.

The last drink warmed him. His position appealed to him for the first time in a new light. He, Bleeker Van Dorn, who might have made anything of his life, had thrown himself away on a woman who had been confined in the Tombs for murder! And she was his wife, sleeping in the next room—the bearer of his name, the custodian of his family honor. It was laughable—a complication for a French farce, or a Greek tragedy!

What is that strange, bluish mist over in the corner, which seems to move toward him? The figure of a man comes out of it—a man he has never seen, but whose face he recognizes instantly from the published pictures. It is Raphael Carabough!

Out of the mist and the damp; out of the gray river, wet and hideous and cold, just as they had found him! Does he point toward the bedroom where his murderess sleeps, or is it only a mad delusion born of the little green devil?

"Have you come to me—have you come to warn me? Yes, yes; I know. She murdered you, but, by heaven, she shall not kill me! She shall not——"

The mist and the figure had vanished. Only the wild-eyed man in smoking-jacket and slippers remained, clutching in his hand the sharp-

pointed, silver-handled Venetian stiletto he had seized from a drawer in his desk. He had often before used it to cut the pages of love-filled romances or dainty envelopes, monogrammed or crested, and addressed in feminine chi-rography. More than one woman had put her heart in those envelopes, which he had carelessly opened with that keen-edged souvenir of Italian days.

He opened the bedroom door, cautiously. His slippered feet made no sound. The light had been left burning, and his wife had thrown one arm over her face to shield it. But the ears of love are sharp and, as he bent over her, she opened her eyes—ah, those beautiful eyes!

"Bleeker, why do you sit up so late?"

He shut his teeth hard and raised his hand high in the air.

In that supreme moment she seemed to divine everything.

"I am innocent!" she cried, piercingly. "I have never committed a crime. Stop! For the child's sake, if not for mine—your innocent child!"

His right arm dropped, in his sudden partial restoration to reason; a vast wonder, shame, remorse, love, shone on his face. He threw the stiletto from him, and fell on his knees by her side.

Bleeker Van Dorn's strange quest was ended. He had found his long-sought, new sensation.



THE DYSPEPTIC

HE dined, not wisely, but too well—
Hence all his ills;
And nothing now agrees with him
Excepting pills.



NO TIME TO LOSE

BRUSHE—I wish my work to live after me.
PENN—Well, you'd better hurry up and die.

THE ARTISTIC TEMPERAMENT

By Ethel M. Kelley

I AM as one who walks apart,
Immune from minor cares.
I pray before the altar, Art—
And copy off my prayers.
It is my privilege to frown;
And, if I do not choose,
I do not pin my shirt-waist down;
I do not tie my shoes.
My soul would soar, and why should I
Keep its proud pinions pent?
Ye grovelers, make way for my
Artistic temperament!

I suffer from a twisted phrase;
A split infinitive
Will make me wonder many days
How in this world I live!
My feelings come so thick and fast
'Tis strange I do not smother;
No sooner one emotion past,
I straightway have another.
I sit and gaze into the sky,
Exquisitely content;
Step softly, lest you joggle my
Artistic temperament.

The relativity of things
Receives my close attention.
My soul has found its eager wings,
And daily makes ascension.
Reposing here on nature's breast,
As one who "also serves,"
I do not think of money lest
It grate upon my nerves.
I cannot figure all that I
Have borrowed and have spent.
Such mundane thoughts would damage my
Artistic temperament.

I am as one who stands within
The holy place of holies;
And no man else may venture in
Who can't tell what his soul is!

I think in sonnets, symphonies;
 And I am one who hears
 The conversation of the seas,
 The murmur of the spheres.
 And, when my Pegasus I fly
 I am so eloquent,
 I am amazed myself at my
 Artistic temperament!



AN AUTUMN IDYLL

COUNT HONORE DE BONNEVILLE and his beautiful American wife had been wedded but a few weeks. On this perfect Autumn night in Southern France, they lingered in a lawn seat before the ancestral château and watched the stars, the twinkling lights on the placid river and the tender young moon that peeped timidly through the tree-tops. The wife's slender hands were clasped closely in those of her husband, and he bent above her fondly, pleading in whispers, passionately.

"Dear heart, my beautiful bride, do not say me nay!"

His face was close to hers, his lips almost touching her pink ear. Stray curls brushed his forehead. The night, the proximity of the beautiful woman, intoxicated him. The blood throbbed in his temples and he breathed quickly. Drawing her closer, he whispered:

"My love, why can you not feel as I do? Consider, you are my wife; we are young—this is the time for us to enjoy our lives to the utmost. How can you hesitate?"

She was plainly moved. She leaned yet closer; her soft cheek touched his an instant, and then, turning her head, their lips met in a long kiss. With flushed face she smiled into his eyes—and yielded.

"Dearest," she murmured, "how can I resist you?"

Then, suddenly, her cooler judgment reasserted itself, and she spoke calmly and decidedly, but, withal, kindly:

"It shall be as you urge—this time."

Drawing from her bosom a package, she removed a rubber band and continued:

"Here are ten dollars. You will have to make that last until the fifteenth. In this, the first month of our married life, you have overdrawn your allowance seventeen dollars and twenty-seven cents. Don't let it occur again."

Wildly he strained her to him. The tender young moon, stealing one last timid glance through the tree-trunks, set with a plunk.

H. G.



A SQUELCHER

HE—I don't propose to make a fool of myself for any woman.
 SHE—Then I wouldn't propose at all, if I were you.

THE POWER OF FLATTERY

By Violet Clarke

SCENE—A hat-shop in the Rue —, Paris. Enter Mrs. and Miss BROWN. MRS. BROWN, a stout, red-faced woman, is talking eagerly to Miss BROWN, a very plain, sallow-faced girl, with prominent teeth.

MRS. BROWN—Now, mind, I don't wish to spend much money. Of course, it would be silly to come away from Paris without buying one hat; but if you get a nice little toque and I get a bonnet, it will be quite sufficient, and I should think we ought to get them for about sixty francs.

Miss BROWN—Oh, yes, mamma; it is no good filling up our boxes with hats; one each will be quite enough.

MRS. BROWN (to ATTENDANT who comes bustling forward)—Parlez vous l'Anglais?

ATTENDANT—Yes, madame.

MRS. BROWN—Ah, that's a comfort! Well, now, I should like to look at a toque for this young lady and a bonnet for myself, but I don't wish anything expensive.

Miss BROWN (taking off her sailor hat and disclosing her hair drawn tightly off her face into a small, hard knob at the back of her head)—Mamma, do look at that lovely pink chiffon hat over there. Oh! and isn't that white one with feathers charming? (gazing around in delight). I feel I could buy up the whole shop.

MRS. BROWN (warming up considerably)—Certainly there are some very pretty things. French taste is always so good.

ATTENDANT (coming up with hats of various forms and colors, and putting a fluffy light-blue one on Miss BROWN's head)—Ah! zat suit made-

moiselle to perfection! Tenez, regardez! (She hands her a mirror. A smile of satisfaction spreads over Miss BROWN's countenance.)

Miss BROWN—Yes, I like that very much; what is the price?

ATTENDANT (with a deprecatory gesture)—Oh, zat very cheap—only sixty francs!

MRS. BROWN (after a slight pause, hesitatingly)—It is rather more than I thought of giving.

ATTENDANT (volubly and rather reproachfully)—Oh, mais, madame, it is so lovely; you could not get anysing more cheap in all Paris, *et regardez comme c'est bien fini*. Ze stuff is so good. (She proceeds at great length to explain that the chiffon is of an extra superior quality, that the straw is a very expensive one, and that even the few paste pins are different and infinitely better than those to be had anywhere else. MRS. BROWN feels vaguely that sixty francs is a large sum to give for a little blue chiffon on a plain straw hat; but she is crushed by the ATTENDANT's volubility, and thinks that it would be beneath her dignity to argue about the price.)

MRS. BROWN—Ye-e-s, of course, it is very good; but will you show us some others, please? (The ATTENDANT perches an erection of pink and gold on Miss BROWN's head and steps back to regard it ecstatically.)

ATTENDANT—Oh, mademoiselle, *cela vous va divinement bien*. Look, madame! (turning to MRS. BROWN) 'ow charming! Ah, zat is ze 'at for mademoiselle!

Miss BROWN contemplates herself in the glass. Can it be possible that this really suits her? Is it only the effect of

the glass that makes her appear so very sallow and so painfully like a skinned rabbit? It must be the fault of the glass, for the ATTENDANT'S voice is ringing in her ears.

ATTENDANT—Ah, mademoiselle look so pretty! *Mon Dieu, que c'est joli!* Nozzing can be better. (Only too willingly is MISS BROWN convinced that she looks charming. MRS. BROWN is so unused to hearing her daughter called pretty that she decides at once to have the hat.)

MRS. BROWN—Yes, I think we will have that one. What is the price, please?

ATTENDANT—A mere nozzing. *Regardez 'ow beautiful is ze gold; it last you one, two years, et puis, it be in ze fashion for a long time; it ze dernier cri.* And mademoiselle is so *charmante* in it! You will take it, madame? *Bien.* (She puts it aside.)

A slight flush of pleasure has come to MISS BROWN'S face; perhaps, after all, she is not so plain, and it is only the bad taste of English milliners that fails to show off her good looks. MRS. BROWN is so pleased that she quite forgets to insist on knowing the price.

ATTENDANT (producing a little white toque)—*Tenez, madame, zis also for mademoiselle.* (She deposits it daintily on MISS BROWN'S head.)

MRS. BROWN (beginning feebly)—No, I don't think—

ATTENDANT (interrupting)—*C'est délicieux, and so sheap.* Ah, madame, it a—what you say in English?—a bargain? And it suit mademoiselle so well. Ah, *ce que c'est d'être jeune et jolie!* (Sighing deeply with her fat hands on her hips.) Everysing suit mademoiselle.

MRS. BROWN weakly nods assent, and this hat also is put one side.

ATTENDANT—And now, just a little *chapeau de voyage?*

MRS. BROWN—No, really we don't wish—

ATTENDANT—Oh, but somesing quite cheap, quite simple! I 'ave just ze sing. (She produces a straw hat turned up in front. It does not suit MISS BROWN, as her hair is very thin

on the temples; but this thought has not time to strike her, for the ATTENDANT is chattering rapidly.) Charming, charming! Oh, *que c'est chic!* How well mademoiselle do her hair! *En générale ze Engleesh se coiffent si mal;* but mademoiselle is an exception—*elle a l'air tout à fait Française.* Mademoiselle will take ze 'at? Yes? (She whisks it one side before MRS. BROWN can open her lips, and continues, hurriedly.) And now, madame want a bonnet? *Parfaitement.* (She carefully removes MRS. BROWN'S bonnet.) But zis is too old for madame. (Looking at it disapprovingly.) She want somesing more *chic*, more young. I 'ave just ze sing. (She tries on an erection of red roses and black feathers.) Ah, *mon Dieu!* How *distinguée* madame look in zat! Oh, how rare it is to 'ave two ladies who look pretty in everysing! Madame's friends will not know her in zat 'at.

MRS. BROWN (who has been surveying her red and elderly countenance in the glass)—But don't you think it is a little young for me? Wouldn't a bonnet be better?

ATTENDANT—Oh, but, madame, *du tout! du tout!* Madame is so very young-looking; it suit madame to perfection. But if madame like to 'ave a little bonnet also, I show her some; but madame cannot always wear a bonnet. It not so *chic*, and she never get anysing to suit her so well as ze 'at; but, perhaps it be good to 'ave a bonnet as well (hoisting a smart green and gold bonnet on her hand). Zis ze very sing for you, madame, and so fashionable. Ah, *cela vous va à merveille!* (In a conclusive tone.) You take zis? (She adds it to the accumulating pile of hats.) And what more can I get madame? I 'ave a black hat to suit her to perfection.

MRS. BROWN feels she must be firm, and gently declines anything further in the shape of headgear. Both she and MISS BROWN are in such a whirl, and so dazzled with their enforced purchases, that they hardly know if they are standing on their heads or their feet; however, they pull themselves together suf-

ficiently to ask how much there is to pay.

ATTENDANT — Oh, never mind, madame. I send ze bill wiz ze 'ats. (*With a bewitching smile.*) Madame can pay when she pass again, tomorrow, next week, any time. It be a mere nozzing. (*With a wave of her hand.*) Allez, I trust madame. (*Showing them to the door.*) Bon jour, mesdames! (*She bows them out and calls after them.*) I put you in some veils to match ze 'ats, madame.

MRS. BROWN — How very civil French people are! They seem so anxious to please one. Dear me! I believe all the reports of their hatred of the English are quite untrue. Our ways are very brusque compared to theirs.

MISS BROWN (*very much elated*) — Really, the hats are lovely! I am so glad we came to this shop.

II

SCENE — *Hôtel de la —, Paris, the next day.* MRS. and MISS BROWN unpacking the hats and trying them on before the mirror.

MRS. BROWN (*in a dissatisfied voice*) — Really, this bonnet is ridiculously young for me. I don't like it at all, and I am sure your father won't.

MISS BROWN — Surely, mamma, this pink hat makes me look very sallow. I wish I had not bought it. Pink never does suit me, but the woman was so positive I looked nice in it.

MRS. BROWN — Now, that I examine the bonnet closely, the feathers seem very common; they look quite different from the way they did yesterday by electric light.

MISS BROWN (*almost tearfully*) — Really, this hat turned up in front makes me look almost bald! And, oh, mamma, the blue-chiffon one is not fresh-looking at all by daylight, and the woman said it was quite new. How disappointing! What shall we do?

MRS. BROWN (*irritably*) — Really, I had no idea we had bought so many

hats! How are we to get them all home?

MISS BROWN (*ruefully looking them over*) — After all, I think that woman was a fraud. This white toque won't keep straight on my head, I told her it wouldn't, and she said it would be all right when I pinned it on; but it isn't. I wish we hadn't gone to that shop.

MRS. BROWN (*with a screech*) — Good heavens! Oh, my goodness! Whatever shall I do? What will your father say? Look at the bill! (*She collapses on the sofa, and MISS BROWN picks up the bill which has fallen to the ground.*)

MISS BROWN (*gasping*) — Oh-h-h! (*Dead silence; then she reads:*)

	Francs
Blue chiffon hat	60
Pink hat.....	150
Straw hat.....	90
White toque.....	100
Bonnet.....	80
Hat with feathers.....	175
Veils.....	20
Total.....	675

Six hundred and seventy-five francs! Oh, mamma! They are not worth a quarter of the money.

MRS. BROWN (*with unnecessary sharpness*) — Can't you see that it says on the bill that purchases cannot be exchanged?

MISS BROWN (*after a painful pause*) — I think I prefer English shops.

MRS. BROWN — It was all that ridiculous flattery (*with an uncomfortable feeling that she was beguiled by it herself*). It's just like a silly girl to listen to it.

MISS BROWN (*in tears*) — But, mamma, I —

MRS. BROWN — Don't argue with me. I am sure I don't know what your father will think; and how to get the wretched things home, I don't know; they will be the greatest nuisance on the journey. Well, I've learned my lesson. No more Paris hats for me. English ones are good enough for anybody; at any rate, they ought to be!

PERIHELION

THE starry mazes of the skies
 No secrets have from her;
 In planet-lore she is so wise,
 My sweet astronomer.

I drop sly hints, when forth we fare
 To view the worlds above;
 I speak of Venus, pale and rare,
 The evening star of Love.

On Saturn, she declares, she dotes,
 And I at nuptial things
 Am hinting, when I hope she notes
 His charm is due to rings.

The double-stars I much prefer
 (They're not alone o' nights);
 And now that I've persuaded her
 To take up satellites,

The heavens with new glory teem,
 For she has promised soon
 To study that delightful theme,
 The glowing honeymoon!

FRANK ROE BATCHELDER.



MELLOW

NODD—My wife actually cried when she saw my condition last night.
 TODD—How did that affect you?
 “I also burst into tears.”



DIAGNOSED

DASHAWAY—I can't make up my mind whether I really love her or not.
 CLEVERTON—I'll tell you an unmistakable sign.
 “What's that?”
 “If it's real, genuine love, you'll want to lend money to your friends.”

THEY THAT KNEW THE LAW

By Bertrand W. Babcock

THEY were dining in the little restaurant that each called bohemian because of the presence of the other.

"The people who eat here are rather sordid," the man said, "but apart from that——"

With quick comprehension the woman interrupted: "Make no apologies for the place; we create our own environment."

It was rather a silent meal for these two, until near its close. The woman had just learned that her publishers would not pay the price she had expected for her manuscripts. She earned her living by her pen, and so she was rather mournful. As for the man, he was living in a state of anxious ecstasy. For two weeks he had not put pen to paper. There was room in his soul now for but one ambition—to conquer the soul of this woman.

"He who wins your love," he said, half in whisper, "has only to die. For him earth holds no more."

The girl looked at him with a passing shadow in her eyes. "I really believe I am beginning to love you——" she began, softly.

From the next table there came the roar of vapid laughter. A heavy youth with the sharp features of the commercial Jew was dining there with two faded blondes.

"I tell you it's the best show on Broadway; knocks the Metropolitan Opera House higher than a kite," was the sentiment to which the blondes enthusiastically assented.

With shuddering timidity the girl drew nearer the man.

"To think that such people as that

should have the wealth of this earth, while you and I——"

The man interrupted: "But you were saying that you were beginning to——"

"I didn't mean it, though; and, besides, I'm not good enough. Just now I was in my tenderest mood, when those people there called me back to my real self. I'm not good enough—I'm not what you think me. I am fond of pretty things—of clothes, for instance. I should like to have wealth just for its material sake. I should like to be beautiful——"

"You are beautiful," murmured the man.

"—just because of the admiration I could command," went on the woman. "You men are all alike; that woman over there is the sort you are drawn by—heavy, sensuous, vapid, but beautiful in a way."

"Marry me!" insisted the man.

"But I don't know that I love you, and I'm not at all sure that I believe in marriage. Sometimes, it seems to me that, in common with all religious practices, it's only a form to keep the lesser intelligence from sinning. We who know the ultimate of the law may disregard it."

The man was not shocked. Instead, he looked thoughtfully at the woman. "I don't say that I believe in marriage," he said, slowly; then, with words that came faster: "but I do believe in you. Marry me!"

"We should be very foolish to marry now. Think of it! We both are at the beginning of something. Each of us has attained a little; enough to show us that there is something beyond. You cannot say now that, after your

play comes out and is, perhaps, a big success, you'll be the same man. Its success, even its failure, will change your whole course of thought. You will not like the same things, the same people. No man with unattained ambition is sane. You may even not like me." She gave him a quick glance, then looked down.

"Always and ever," the man whispered. "There's only one thing I can say——"

"Don't say it," commandingly.

"I won't, then."

A pause.

"You may if you wish," demurely.

"I love you."

"Don't be so foolish. You and I are growing. Now we are in obscurity we are natural. We have done our work. Your play and my novel are written and disposed of. We have only to wait for their public appearance. It has been a restful, delightful interval. Don't let's spoil it now by doing anything which, when we are changed, as we shall be when we appear before the public, we'll regret. I shouldn't dare marry yet; I shall change. I don't know what I'll be like in a few months. Now, are you convinced?"

"No."

"You're not convinced?"

"No."

"I don't know that I am entirely convinced." The woman's voice was softening.

"Life together would be delightful," the man continued. "We are interested in the same things, we have the same ambitions, and as for living—well, we couldn't have more than a modest little place at first, but here in town we could have a little apartment——"

"And such a pretty little apartment we could make it, with your pictures and my books, couldn't we?" said the woman, her cheeks flushing. Then, bethinking herself, she stopped.

The man went on: "We could each have separate work-rooms. Every morning, just before we settled down to our writing, we'd have little conversations—not very long, of course, just long enough to let each

know that the other sympathized with his effort. Then, cheerful and inspired, we'd go to our work."

"Yes, yes," the woman broke in; "and to each of us the thought of the other working there, not very far away, would be a spur. We'd give our best effort to our work, but even in the midst of it neither of us would ever be entirely unconscious of the other's personality and love."

The woman stopped, her hand laid in emphasis on the table. Gently and reverently the man put his own over it. There was expectation in the look that each gave the other. The man's whole being breathed out a longing that the woman felt. Then he spoke:

"Will you do it?"

The woman trembled.

"Ye-es," she faltered.

A splintering of glass, followed by incoherent laughter, sounded from the near-by table.

"You can bet I'm no lulu bird," sharply exclaimed one of the blondes.

Convulsively, the woman tore away her hands. "No, no, no!" she almost sobbed.

The man realized sharply that he had lost her mood. "Dearest," he insisted, "you know I love and respect you beyond the whole world. You were beginning to see what it would mean to us. Come, now, quickly, before your best, your true mood is gone. Come! The Little Church Around the Corner isn't far. Come now, to-night. Come!"

The woman was shivering; there were tears in her eyes. "No, no, I tell you, I won't," she said, decisively.

"But, dearest, defer to my mood just a little. Let's go to the Little Church——"

"No, I won't."

"But not to marry. You were in the mood of your highest nature just now. Let us go there, to the church. We won't go in. Let us go only to stand outside in the darkness and look at the place where we might have been married; just to the church door. It's a concession to my mood

and a monument to yours. Will you go?"

Abruptly the woman arose. Quickly he put her cloak about her. Then, clinging to his arm, she went with him. As they passed the next table, the two women looked curiously at her.

"Rather odd-looking girl; pretty, though, don't you think?" asked the man.

"Yes, but she's got a look in her eyes I don't like," answered one of the women.

Without, the man and woman hurried through the dripping side-streets. The hard glare of the lights was softened and shattered by the diffusing wet of the pavements. The gleam of the colored lights found its reflection under foot. A damp wind made swinging signs overhead creak. The hoofs of hurrying cab-horses sounded indistinct and crunching on the wet asphalt. The two hastened silently on toward the Avenue. Suddenly, the man's free hand sought the woman's arm.

"Look!" he whispered.

Turning sharply, she found herself before a church set back from the street. From the bare, swaying limbs of trees water dripped. Through a picturesque lich-gate the wind moaned regretfully. Back, behind the trees, the low church building rose blackly insistent.

The woman no longer thought of anything. She moved passively at the touch of the man, whose arm indicated a forward path.

At the oaken door the man stopped; with a quick gesture he uncovered his head; his hand sought the door-knob; the door swung open to his hesitating, fumbling movement; he stretched out his arms.

"Come," he said.

The woman took a step forward, then stopped, raising her face to his. She lowered her eyes; her lips moved.

"Why need there be any ceremony?" she said, faintly.

With a sharp jolt, whose sudden stopping of forward motion seemed to

mark to those within the beginning of an epoch, the carriage that had brought two silent people from Graytown's railroad station drew up before the door of a pleasant country house.

Even before the carriage stopped, Clyde Swinton heard the swift patter of little feet down the veranda steps and then along the walk to the street. Great as was the dignity of Mrs. Swinton upon the extraordinary occasions of the gathering together of Graytown's leading social set, she could never wait for the carriage to stop when Clyde came home. The son could not see the mother when first he heard her footsteps, but the little patter set suddenly before him, as even the presence of death had failed to do, the whole course of his youth and early manhood. When, as a boy, he had returned from college, no matter how late the hour, those same little footfalls had tripped out to him their story of love. So it had been later when, as a man, he had come to the place—embittered by the constant flitting of his ambition to a plane always beyond his reach, to seek a little rest from the world, before again going out to have hope deferred. And those delicate beats had always smitten his heart and conscience.

"Here is love, here is solace," he had told himself then. "Is it worth while to put away all these things, simply for the sake of an ambition?"

Now, as he heard the footfalls, there was a note of poignant reproach in their sound. They came to him with a welcome, glad in a hope he had falsely stirred. He was about to deceive his mother's love. All that she had wished him to be came now, and sat on his conscience, to mock him with all that he knew he was. His head sank upon his hands.

Suddenly, he looked at the woman who accompanied him. Did she appreciate his feeling at this moment?

A smile, inscrutable, but fraught with a subtle suggestion of an ulterior intelligence, answered him.

"I think, Clyde," she said, "some

one's coming to meet you. You'd better get out now."

He shuddered. Then, with the courage of a conscience at bay, he opened the door. Down the last of the steps to the street a little form rushed. Two arms put themselves in the old way about his neck.

"My dear, good, good boy!"

Clyde trembled. "We got the clippings and newspapers all right. You don't know, Clyde dear, how proud we are all of you. To think of little Clyde being a great playwright! You know, dear, one of those critics called you 'the great coming exponent of American national life.' But—" she stopped, looking wistfully at the carriage, then continued, quickly—"but your wife, Clyde! Here I'm running on in this way, forgetting—"

"Yes, yes, my wife."

Clyde turned to the carriage and stretched out a hand into its interior. The woman, taking it, stepped to the street. Clyde looked at her amazed. In her face were tense lines that seemed to add years to her age; she had steeled herself against a great emotion. When Clyde spoke, neither of the women heard him.

"Mother, this is my wife."

The two stood staring silently at each other. The glance of the mother sought the soul of the woman her son had called his wife. The regard of the other strove forcefully to repel the penetration of love; she was on guard. To Clyde the stillness seemed oppressively long.

The mother held out her hand.

"I think I am going to like you," she said, with little conviction of manner.

"Now, Clyde, Mary wants to see you," his mother told him in the hallway; "she's made a lot of those dear little biscuit you used to like so when you were a boy. Run along now to the kitchen, and I'll look after you—after Frances."

Glad of the opportunity to recover himself, Clyde hurried away. The two women went up the stairway together to the guest-chamber.

Frances's baggage had gone before, and now she began silently to tumble the contents of Clyde's suit-case on the bed. A number of books slid out among the brushes and cosmetics.

A sharp cry of prolonged delight came from Clyde's mother. Frances turned, peevishly. Would they never leave her alone? She must cry soon; she could not restrain herself forever. Clyde's mother held one of the books in her hand.

"Oh, 'Arla, An Annal of Love, by Frances Estep,'" she read from the title-page. "'To Clyde's mother, with love.' My dear, did you write 'Arla'?" Clyde told me you were an author, but I didn't know you wrote 'Arla.' And you wrote those wonderful things! Why, I wept and was delightfully happy over that book. And you meant that copy for me—for me?"

Frances felt that unnatural hardness within her dissolving into a tenderer emotion. "For you, dear mother," she faltered.

The older woman, putting her arms about the girl, drew her down on the bed and kissed her. Controlling herself no longer, Frances rested her face on the bosom of the other; bitter sobs convulsed her. The mother comforted.

"There! there!" she said, when Frances was quieter. "It was the most natural thing in the world that you should cry. Everything's so new and strange here, but we'll soon become used to each other. And I wasn't sure that I was going to love you—you don't know how jealous a foolish mother can be!"

"Will you love me now?" asked Frances.

And the older woman kissed her for answer. "You will be good to Clyde, won't you?" she asked, putting her handkerchief to the tears still glistening on the girl's cheek.

"I never had a mother," said Frances, abruptly. Then, releasing herself, she sat up. "There's something I must tell you—" she began.

The mother shook her head. "Not now, Frances. You see, I have called you 'Frances.' On this first day you must not act too much on your overwrought impulses. But I wish to say something to you in the seriousness of my new love for you."

The girl nestled back beside her. "Say on." She spoke almost gaily, in hysterical reaction.

The older woman took her hand, playing in delicate affection with the soft little fingers.

"I'm not very well, Frances. I don't wish Clyde to know anything about it, but I've been in bed pretty much of the past week. The doctor told me this morning that I mustn't think of getting up, but, you know, Clyde—you and Clyde were coming." She paused. Frances pressed her hand. And then the mother said, softly: "I don't think I'll be long with you."

"No, no; don't say that, mother."

"And I want you to be good to Clyde, if anything happens. He's the best boy in the world. You know, I've always been bound up in him. It has been my dearest ambition—not that Clyde should succeed, I knew he'd do that—but that he should marry a good woman; and, Frances, dear, I am ready for anything, now that he has; my heart has its desire. You will—you will be a good wife to him, Frances?"

"I will be to him all that a good wife should," Frances said.

That night, alone in their room, a constraint that neither Clyde nor Frances had felt before came upon them. Clyde, conscious of the fixed regard of Frances, did not once meet her eyes. Instead, he fumbled over some manuscripts, fussily and to no purpose.

"Do you know," he said, at last, without looking up from the typewritten pages before him, "do you know that you two made a very pretty stage picture this morning?"

Frances was silent.

"Very pretty," he went on, hastily,

in confusion, "the mother welcoming the bride——"

"The bride!" the girl echoed, in a bitterness that sank into her own soul as into his, "'the bride!' I tell you, Clyde Swinton, if I thought that it were not, as you said, due to the prattle of a mutual friend that your mother learned of our being together, and invited you and your wife to visit her, if I thought that you had deliberately introduced me to your mother as your wife, I should——"

"Do what?"

But she remained silent.

Early in the morning, a sudden knock at the door of the bed-chamber startled Clyde.

"What is it?" he demanded.

"I think, Mr. Clyde, you had better get up. Your mother is very ill, sir."

The grave tones of the servant filled Clyde with alarm. He dressed quickly. Frances opened her eyes as he unfastened the door.

"What is it?" she asked.

"Nothing; I shall return soon."

Within a few minutes he was back, a somber light in his eyes. He found Frances dressed.

"Come," he said, throwing wide the door.

The girl looked into his face and saw there only a deep sadness. Taking his proffered hand, she went with him. Before a closed door they stopped, while Clyde tapped gently. A man in plain black opened it for them and then stood aside in the hallway. Clyde walked to a great screen standing near the door. With trembling hand he pointed the way to the girl. Dimly feeling the approach of some great sorrow, she passed alone before him. From the bed beyond, a pale face smiled longingly up at her. With a rush the girl knelt at the bedside, burying her face in its coverings.

"Don't! my daughter, don't!" said a gentle voice, in the tone of one who had passed beyond the whole range of human emotion; "don't! See, I am happy; I smile."

That smile of infinite pity and love

sought through the very vitals of the man. He quailed, moved forward, then stopped.

"Dear daughter, don't grieve for me," went on the poor, weak voice; "my mission is ended. I have committed the love of my son to his wife. I don't care to live longer. You will remember, you will be good to him!"

From the coverlet the girl lifted hard, tearless eyes.

"Mother, mother, we have deceived you!" she said, so that only the mother heard; "Clyde and I were never——"

The mother looked again at the kneeling girl. Then, in response to the unspoken entreaty, the girl placed her ear close to the smiling lips.

"My child," said the mother, so that the girl, bending over, scarcely heard, "I knew!"

One more effort to speak; then:

"Don't tell Clyde I——"

From the rear of the room a cry sounded; Clyde rushed forward.

"Mother! mother!" he cried.

There was no answer from the bed. He looked up from the rigid figure there to the girl standing at the bedside. His eyes found in hers only horror and repulsion.

"Frances," he whispered.

The girl's lips made no movement. Silently, as before, she stared at him.

"Frances!"

Still the girl regarded him, silently.

Abruptly the man bowed his head and left her, still standing there beside the bed.

It was dark within the Swinton residence, and outside the rain poured down from a black heaven when, groping his way in the blindness of emotion, Clyde sought his room. At the door his trembling hand rested on the knob.

"To-morrow, to-morrow, ever to-morrow, my curse. It shall be to-day, now, this instant," he muttered, pressing one shaking hand to the weight that was bearing down on his brain.

"Frances," he called, softly.

The swirling swish of the driving

rain against the corridor window reached him as he waited.

"Frances!"

A bough of the big oak outside, snapped by the wind, dropped to the gravel walk.

"Frances, Frances, Frances! You, too!"

He clutched at the door-knob. It slipped from his nervous effort. With an oath he forced the door open. Through the open window the storm rushed to meet him. He groped about the disordered room, calling in tones unfamiliar to him, "Frances!"

No one was there.

Across the floor, wet from the rain, a white paper came, blown by the rushing wind. He watched it, unable to move. Nearer and nearer it came, until, at a sharper blast from outside, it stopped, quivering, at his feet. The man started back, then rushed to take it up. He carried it to the still open window. It contained one word, in Frances's writing, "Good-bye."

An hour later they found him lying close by the window, his head wet with the rain.

Upon her return trip, Frances Estep remained in New York but the portion of a day, just long enough to arrange some business with her publishers.

"I had agreed to write that novel," she told them; "you thought my style might gloss over the enormities of the theme."

"Yes, and we'll give you a cheque now."

"I do not care to undertake it just yet," the girl said, deliberately; "nor at any other time."

The senior partner shrugged his shoulders; then he whistled. "Very well," he decided; "perhaps it's better as it is. You're not looking at all well, Miss Estep."

"I have just lost a very dear relative," answered the girl, wincing at all that the words meant and recalled.

It was some time after this that the critics made their great discovery. The open-hearted and delightfully sentimental Frances Estep was striving

after an effect foreign to her personality.

"The broad and deep personality," wrote one of them, "that divested vice and virtue alike of any ulterior ethical significance and gave to us pictures of life in which no conscious effort was made to point a moral, has become restricted and contracted. The girl who saw life as it is and gave it to us, as she saw it, not really knowing life's significance, is striving after moral effects. Frances Estep rebukes vice and pats virtue on the head in just as serious and, it may be added, in just as inartistic fashion, as ever did author of howling, roaring melodrama. Has some one said to Frances Estep, 'You are a bad little girl; be good and write Sunday-school books'?"

Such criticism found appreciation and reading all over the country among the disappointed folk who were familiar with the later works of the author of "*Arla, An Annal of Love.*" Frances colored when she read it. For weeks past she had destroyed the art of her method, feeling herself a murderess, but declaring to herself that concession to the moral order must be made by even a popular author.

"Now, Vice, be rebuked, and, Virtue, take thy reward," she would say, in pathetic humor, as she married off to his dull rival some heroine, who by all the laws of psychology and art should have wedded "the lovely wicked man."

For months Frances lived alone in a little town up the Hudson. At first the horror of that day never left her, in the sunshine or near the sparkling water. Then, as she threw herself into her work and lived in vivid companionship with her characters, she thought no more of the awful pathos of that mother's death. Once she caught herself mentally arranging the scene for description. Then she knew that its personal horror for her was gone, that finally it would appeal to her only as art.

Against Clyde she had no resentment. She had given herself to him freely; but so little had she, during her life, regarded the conventions which

shackled others, that there was not in her soul that sense of defilement and personal unworthiness that would have oppressed a woman whose very fibres convention had enmeshed. She looked on Clyde simply as a lover from whom she had separated, just as any girl separates from a sweetheart—for some feminine reason. She had too little in common with ordinary natures to realize the meaning of the term husband. In the biography that a great man wrote of her, years later, it was said that her moral nature was undeveloped. Vice and sin shocked her just as did the suffering of those dear to her, but for her they had no moral value. So, after the first horror of that tragedy had passed, there was no reproach in her soul.

She had not returned to New York after that first day. Her publishers, jealous of possible rivals, had taken her later stories as soon as they were written. Whenever they desired to be in more immediate relation with her, one of them went to the little town where she hid herself. She had given them strict injunction to reveal her whereabouts to no one.

Of Clyde she never heard in these days. She knew that he was doing no work, for the papers told of the production of no more Clyde Swinton plays. As for herself, at the end of some months, she was beginning to hope that as new characters stalked through her imagination she would forget the one man who, alone of the myriad men of her fancy's creation, had been real to her. Finally, she came gladly to the point where she told herself that the impression left by his personality was more dim by far than that of the latest of her created characters.

"I am very happy over it," she told herself.

It was Munster, the junior partner, however, who brought it all back—Munster, who came just a little oftener than he could give reasonable excuse for, Munster, whom she had been obliged to snub severely on several occasions.

"Oh, by the way," he said, "that fellow Swinton's been around again. Keeps coming and wants your address; fairly haunts the street; seems to think that you'll show up there. And they say he's gone mad lately. Since the production of that play of his, all the managers in New York and on the other side, too, I hear, have been running after him. Though they offer big figures he won't sign to write them a thing. Mad, don't you think?"

After the voluble little man had gone, Frances felt something rising in revolt.

"Pshaw, but I don't wish to see him," she told herself, making an effort to think no more of Swinton.

She occupied herself in putting the last touches to some work nearly completed. In the middle of the afternoon she was surprised that she had accomplished so little.

"I know what's the matter," she told herself, in exasperation; "I've been mured up here too long; I'm going down to the city just for the night."

"You needn't blush, you silly thing," she said, catching a glimpse of herself in a mirror; "you aren't going to see him."

It was well past her usual dinner-hour when she finished the shopping that she had tried to make herself believe was the real reason for her trip. She had devoted her whole energy and mind to it.

When she had bought all that her time and money would permit, she found herself near Twenty-eighth street.

"Where shall I eat?" she asked herself. "Oh, I know a place. We used to go there. I don't think there's any chance of meeting him; at least, I hope not; but why should I allow any man to deprive me of New York?"

For all her stoicism, it was with a beating heart that she passed beneath the brightly-lighted portico. Their old waiter knew her at once. He conducted her to their old table.

"Shall I lay the table for two?" he asked.

"No—why, yes," she answered.

"I'll dine with his memory" she added to herself.

"Inanimate things hold no associations for us," she had once declared, thinking that she believed it. Now, as she sat there, not seeing the other people, a flood of memory rose and beat upon the doors of her heart. The place was replete with Clyde's personality. But she struggled against herself and against all that these things held for her.

"No, I won't wait. Just serve me," she ordered the waiter.

For some reason the food did not taste as she thought it would. She had finally abandoned a valiant effort upon a *filet mignon* when laughter at a near-by table aroused her. Over there, just beyond, the Jew was sitting with his two blonde friends.

But there was some one else there—a tall man with pale, thin face, who sat opposite one of the blondes, listening politely but absently to the conversation. Had he come down to the level of these? Sharp resentment filled her.

Then she knew he saw her.

"Excuse me," she heard him say, "but some one is here whom I expected."

He crossed to her table.

"May I help you?" he asked, as though he had been separated from her but a moment.

"Who are those vile people over there?" she demanded.

Hope came into his face.

"Oh, a theatrical manager and some of his leading people that I happen to know," he replied, eagerly.

"Really, it doesn't matter."

During the remainder of that meal the woman steadily repressed any conversational effort on his part. After their coffee he stood up without a word and put her cloak about her shoulders.

"Come!" he said.

Silently she followed. As they passed the Jew's table, one of the women looked at her with a new interest.

"That look's gone from her face," she said; "she is going to a great happiness."

"Great happiness! look in her face!" repeated the man; "what do you know about it?"

The woman laughed, scornfully.

"Everything. In spite of all, I'm still a woman."

Outside, Clyde put Frances into a cab and stepped in himself. Then he leaned out his head.

"To the Little Church Around the Corner," he told the cabman.



THE ETIQUETTE OF ART CRITICISM

BEING A FEW RULES TO ENABLE THE UNINFORMED TO PASS FOR CONNOISSEURS WHEN VIEWING AN EXHIBITION OF PICTURES

RULE 1.—Always admire a Whistler.

RULE 2.—If you are introduced to an artist, it is no longer considered one of the essentials of good form to talk to him about his own work. If you will lead up to the subject discreetly, he will save you the trouble.

RULE 3.—It is equally important to avoid admiring anything because "it looks natural." It is safer to scorn all such works as being "photographic."

RULE 4.—If you wish to direct attention to any particular picture, point with the thumb instead of with the finger. Though the fact is not widely known, most artists acquire this habit, probably from the constant use of the thumb in manipulating paint or charcoal. To the knowing ones, the use of this characteristic gesture will at once place you in the inner circle.

RULE 5.—To complete the true professional pose when examining a work of art, it is necessary to throw the head very much on one side and gaze at the picture through half-closed eyes. Next, look at the painting through the

small opening that is left when the hand is loosely closed. The picture will not show to any better advantage when seen through the hand, and artists rarely adopt this method; but it is one of those ancient superstitions that the veteran connoisseur clings to, and the novice will, therefore, regard it as an essential.

RULE 6.—When hard pressed for some comment, you can always fall back on the word "interesting." There is something exceedingly professional about this word. It is the haven of refuge of many distinguished critics when describing execrable works by their friends, or by the chief officers of important art organizations.

RULE 7.—Interlard your conversation with a plentiful sprinkling of such art terms as *chiaroscuro*, *morbidezza*, *verve*, *tonality*, *motif*, *impasto*, *milieu*, *atmosphere* and the like. Even if you do not use them correctly, it will not matter, as they belong to the lingo of the professional critic, and even artists have but a vague idea of their meaning.

E. L. W.



A REQUEST

HUSBAND—I can't think of any one whom you get things from that we don't owe money to.

WIFE—If you do, let me know.

UNDER ALL SKIES

NOW that dear Love, in whom we so rejoice,
 Leads gaily on where favoring breezes blow,
 Skies smile, flowers bloom, and cool, still waters flow,
 Right glad are we to be his happy choice,
 Clasp his fond hands and listen to his voice.

But always 'tis Love's lot some day to go
 Through dreary desert wastes, some day to meet
 Life's hunger and its thirst, its cold and heat;
 To be on blinding winds tossed to and fro;
 Now, tell me, shall we walk with Love or no?

When we, love-led, have reached the desert land,
 The land of fierce heat, yea, and fiercer frost,
 Whose dreary desolation must be crossed,
 Where storm clouds gather like an armed band,
 Then, think you, dear, we will let go Love's hand?

Lift up your eyes! words are of little worth;
 Ah! you are brave, daring so much to lose,
 And you are wise such perilous gain to choose.
 Now, through sweet hyacinth glades, or desert dearth,
 We follow on. Lead forth, O Love, lead forth!

CARLOTTA PERRY.



THE PAST AND THE PRESENT

IN days gone by
 When she and I
 Would drive through leafy lanes,
 I begged my Jane,
 But all in vain,
 To let me hold the reins.

'Twas long ago—
 Now, to my woe,
 My vigor slowly wanes;
 For Jane, you see
 ('Twixt you and me),
 Still firmly holds the reins.

McLANBURGH WILSON.

A STILL SMALL VOICE

By Emma Wolf

S AID Jeffrey: "They are both interesting, and—great friends."

"Yes," said Helen; "platonics, you know."

"Pooh!" said he, with a teasing laugh.

"The real thing," returned the girl, indignantly.

"But modern," said he. "A dangerous game, remember."

"For some, perhaps."

"But you forget," he laughed,

"The Colonel's lady and Judy O'Grady are sisters—under their skins."

"Don't quote your cynicisms to me. That's what this hateful modernity is made of—snatches and patches of pessimisms, catchingly phrased for the weak-minded. If all the world turns bad, it will be because all the fascinating writers of the day are writing badness so fascinatingly into people's potentialities."

"That's an admission. It reminds one of Sargent's pictures—the concealed revealed through art. So literature plays the devil, eh? But we were speaking of platonics."

"No, we were speaking of Mrs. Heath and John Henshaw."

"Ah, I had forgotten! There is no connection. They are quite safe. I beg their pardons."

"I should think you would. Take not the name of my goddess in vain."

"Everybody's goddess. She's a toast one drinks standing. Mrs. Heath—God bless her!"

"Amen—to that and all further solemnity," said Helen, jumping up. "It's too warm to think. There goes Tom Heath with his racquet, now. I'm going. Will you come?"

The Summer silence fell again about the hotel veranda. A leaf fluttered into the lap of the woman sitting, book in hand, in the little jasmine-covered recess in the angle. She did not move. Her eyes were bent on the page before her. She did not see it. The dead are no less still.

"Madame! Pardon, pardon, madame, but——"

"Yes, Marie?" She was on her feet, a slender, alert, ready figure. But the maid's face was dim before her.

"The baby is still restless, madame. I——"

"I will go to him. You need not come."

Her filmy skirts swept over the floor of the veranda. The slender, graceful figure vanished in the doorway.

The room was dark and cool. She closed the door noiselessly, locking it. She moved over and bent down to her child's breathing. It was even and low. But the little hands were hot. They stirred under her light touch, and the child murmured in his sleep. She turned and, without a sound, glided into the chair at the foot of the cradle. Her foot touched the treadle lightly. She began to rock her child with slow, gentle swing.

The room was dark and cool. The woman's still face cut cameo-white through the gloom. Behind the face was chaos. Her eyes were fixed on a spot in the opposite wall. By some perversion of her obsessed senses, it seemed to hold her steady, to direct her, dominate her; a still, sane voice rising out of and above the panic of her dumb, agonized beseechings.

"Take care of me."

"I will."

"Don't let me do anything horrid."

"You won't."

"Take that hand off my throat."

"There is no hand on your throat."

"It is choking me. I can't see. My eyes are all bloodshot."

"No; they are quite clear."

"I wish I were dead."

"You are rocking your baby's cradle, forward and backward, forward and back."

"I love him—I love John Henshaw."

"You are Tom Heath's wife."

"I did not know I loved John Henshaw till now. They told me—just now—out there on the veranda. I love John Henshaw—irrevocably. It came over me like fire—rushing and burning through me—the revelation. Stop it! Stop this knowledge. I will not know it. I am John Henshaw's friend. Tell me—can't you tell me I am only his friend?"

"You are Tom Heath's wife. He loves you; he trusts you."

"Oh, God, set me free!"

"You cannot be freed. Tom Heath loves you—trusts you. You told him you loved him when you married him."

"But I am different now—changed. Help me. I love no one, no one as I love John Henshaw. I have never loved any one before. I know it now. Listen. I—have—no—desire—in all the world—but—to put—my arms—about him—now—to——"

"You are rocking your baby's cradle."

"I would go to hell with him! It would be heaven."

"Your child is not very well to-day. A mother must take care of her child; and you love yours dearly—very dearly."

"I love John Henshaw. There is no one else."

"You are Tom Heath's wife."

"It is a mistake. I was too young; I did not know what love might be; no one told me. Let me go."

"You cannot escape your mistake."

"Some do."

"Not you."

"Oh, me! Even I. Who am I?"

"A good woman."

"You gibe. Let me go!"

"No."

"Let me go, I say! Marriage is a tyranny."

"Yes."

"I defy it."

"You dare not."

"My God, what can I do?"

"Suffer—"

"I will not."

"—and give no sign."

"I cannot."

"You must."

"Must women suffer like this?"

"Many."

"Why?"

"For the sake of order."

"Order? Let there be chaos—so that I may love him."

"For the sake of the world."

"What is that to me? I am I."

"For the sake of the weak and undisciplined."

"They are nothing to me. Why should I be a martyr for them?"

"Example — precept — are everything."

"Let me alone. Why should I care? I am not a missionary."

"For the sake of little children."

"Let me be. Am I the keeper of the world?"

"You menace the sanctity of the home."

"Cant, truism. Sanctity? What sanctity can attach itself to a lie?"

"The semblance of sanctity."

"But hell for me."

"You? Who are you?"

"I am a woman—most unhappy."

"You are nothing—in the scheme for the whole."

"Then God is a monster; I renounce Him—hate Him."

"Hush! You are speaking through passion."

"You lie."

"There is no reason in your contention. It is the sophistry of egotistic, elemental passion."

"No, no!"

"Yes."

"But I love him! Love is higher

than passion—higher than elemental passion. It will endure through all things—it will outlast all things—all change—it will outlast life—it will outlast death.”

“How do you know that?”

“I know—as I know there are stars above.”

“You thought that, when you married Tom Heath?”

“No; I thought of nothing then but the moment. I loved him—with the same depth with which I loved the pearl necklace he clasped about my throat—no more.”

“But you thought you would be true to him through life.”

“A pure girl never thinks of that.”

“She takes it for granted.”

“I—I cannot stand this torture.”

“You must. How do you know your love for John Henshaw would prove any stronger, if another stronger than he should appear? What if the years again change you?”

“They cannot change my love. I am grown—full-stature. There will never be another—for me.”

“You cannot read the future. You cannot know. No one can know. That is why marriage is—why it must be. We are not fit for freedom.”

“Yes, yes. You—I—we read through conventionalized eyes—our thoughts are shackled—born shackled—the truth is crushed under—struggling to the light. We are better than we were. Marriage is an insult—it is no consecration; it is desecration.”

“That is the catch-penny higher rot of the day—the weapon of men whose ruling passions are in anarchy against dominant reason.”

“Reason—reason! What is reason? And what if it is so? Why analyze? Or, if you must analyze—God made it so. Why? Let me alone. I *will* be happy.”

“How—happy?”

“I will make him happy.”

“How—do you—know—that?”

“What?”

“That you will make him happy.”

“I—”

“Has he ever confessed his love for you?”

“No—no. But, I know.”

“Has he ever looked love—such love—to you?”

“No; but—”

“Has he ever suggested anything beyond a friendship between you, deep as it is rare—but—anything more?”

“Oh, never.”

“How, then, do you know?”

“I know by our perfect mating—by the silences we have lived through together; by the tone of his voice—to me; by the glance of his eye—on me.”

“Yet, you said——”

“I have but to speak one word, look one look, and his love will become conscious and turn to me—as mine to him.”

“But you will never speak that word.”

“Ah——”

“You will never look that look.”

“—I am so cold, so cold! Am I dead?”

“No.”

“Something died, then—something terrible and beautiful. What was it?”

“Nothing. You have ceased to struggle.”

“Why?”

“Because—you are a good woman.”

“I—good?”

“Yes.”

“But I love a man—other than my husband. I shall always love him.”

“Yes.”

“And yet—I am—good?”

“You are human. You have instincts.”

“But not bad?”

“You have principles. You will not be bad.”

“What can I do?”

“No one must ever know.”

“But I know.”

“No one else.”

“Never?”

“Never.”

“Some day——”

“Never.”

"I must go away—from him—from John Henshaw—from the man I love."

"You must not say that; you must not say 'John Henshaw, the man I love.'"

"Not even to myself?"

"Never to yourself."

"I could almost laugh. Oh——"

"Hush!"

"I will go away; I am not strong enough."

"You will stay here. You will be strong."

"Help me."

"I am helping you. I am crowning you. Hush!—you are strong—now."

"How still it is! Who are you?"

"I am—you."

"Help me."

"I am helping you."

"Stay with me."

"I am here."

"Keep me quiet."

"You are quiet."

"So quiet. How—quiet—it is—to be good! How—strangely—quiet! Is it death? How quiet is death! There is—a long death—to live."

"You are rocking your baby's

cradle. Forward and backward—forward and back."

In the evening, when the lights were low in the pretty club-house, Mrs. Heath came in alone.

"Oh, here she comes!" they cried. "We have been waiting for you. We missed you so at dinner. How is the baby?"

"He is quite well, I think. We've just been having such a splendid romp together. What were you waiting for?"

"Mr. Henshaw has some new songs we want you to try."

"Where is Mr. Henshaw—and where are his songs? Oh, good evening; I did not see you when I came in."

"You were too busy smiling at your husband. Will you play? Then come over to the piano. I'll turn for you. But, confidentially, what do those weird shadows mean about your eyes?"

"My eyes? You must be dreaming. Or—oh, these flickering lights! Aren't they unbecoming! Come, turn the leaves for me."



CAPRICE

I MUST answer you now,
As you look so despairing.
But I'm puzzled just how
I must answer you now.
(If the cloud on your brow
Should be Cupid's sly daring!)
I must answer you now,
As you look so despairing.

Now you're ready to smile,
You must wait for your answer;
Love her fears may beguile,
Now you're ready to smile.
Lest a frown come the while,
Go, as quick as you can, sir!
Now you're ready to smile,
You must wait for your answer.

FRANK WALCOTT HUTT.